No 28 July 1985

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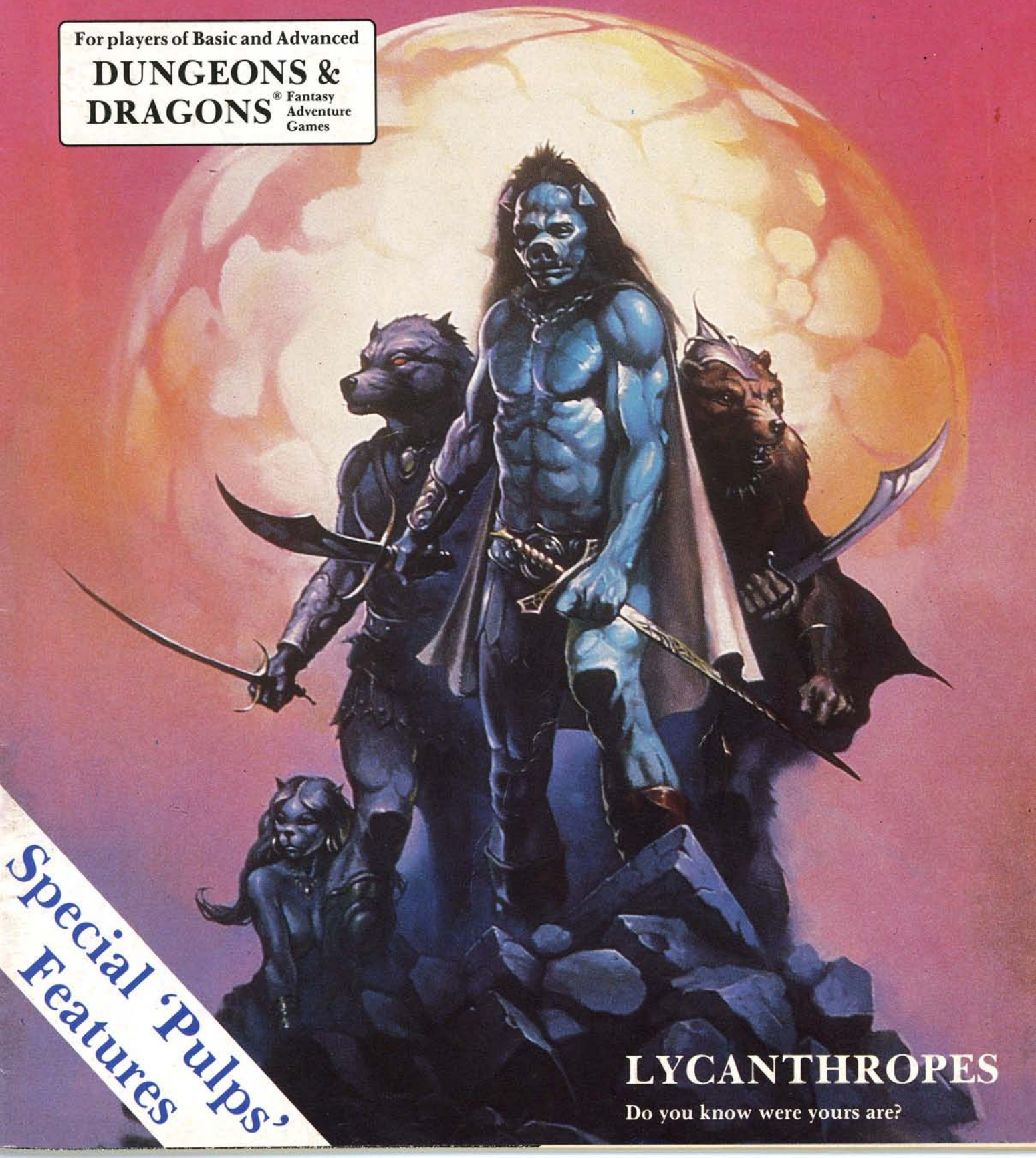

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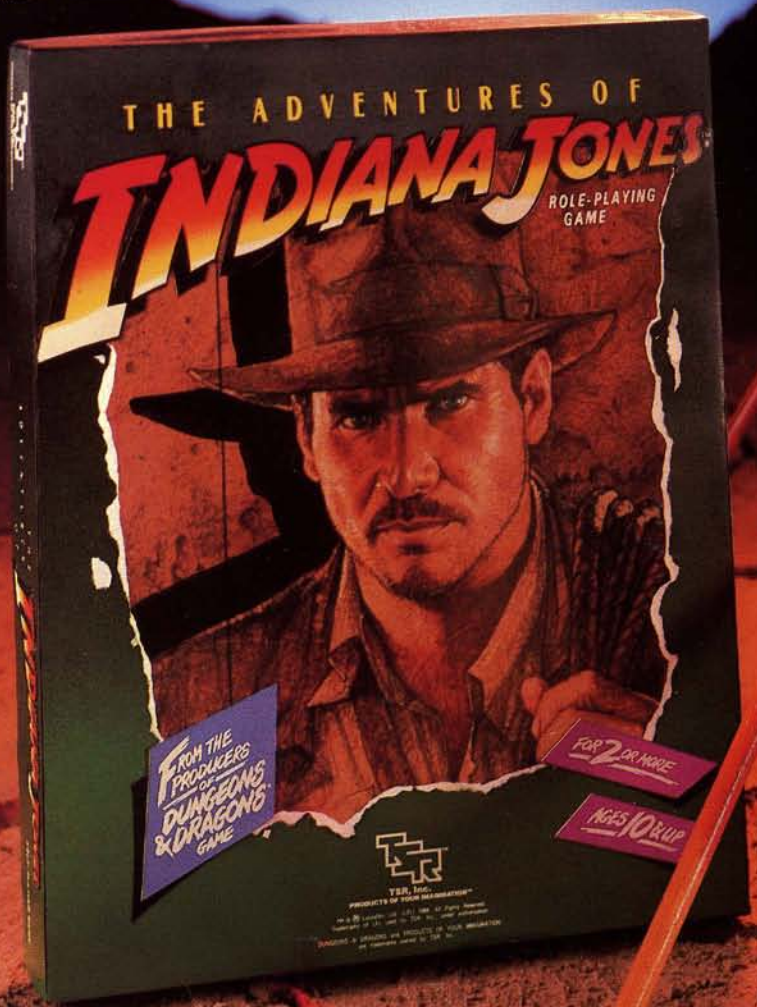

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IMAGINE™ Magazine

Contents

The Masked Avengers by Paul Mason: Reading and role-playing in the 20s & 30s 2
....And Action! by Mark Davies & Derrick Norton: A new initiative 4
Lycanthropy by Chris Felton: Put some bite back into your werewolves 10
PELINORE — IMAGINE™ magazine's campaign world 15
THIS MONTH: The Gods of the Domains, by Chris Felton 17
Carraway Keep, by Graeme Drysdale 20
The Cthulhu Mythos, by David Hill: The growth of the Great Old Ones 25
A Nice Night For Screaming, by Marcus Rowland: A scenario for Daredevils, Gangbusters and other heroes 34
The English Daredevil, by Chris Felton 49
Time for the Little People, by Hilary Robinson ... 36
Notices: games viewed by independent reviewers 41
Dispel Confusion 44
Game Company, clubs & events 44
Rubic of Moggedon 45
Illuminations: news from the world of gaming 46
Letters 48
VOP, by Ian Gibbs 49
Stirge Corner, by Roger Musson 51
Soapbox: the hobby forum 52
Press Cuttings: fanzine coverage 52
Fantasy Media, by Neil Gaiman 54
Phalanx, by Robin Grenville-Evans 55
Cover ..... Ken Kelly

..... **IMAGINE magazine, No 28, July 1985** .....
..... Published by TSR UK Ltd ..... Publisher **Don Turnbull** ..... Editor **Keith Thomson** .....
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..... This month's contributing artists: **Robin Grenville Evans, Ian Gibbs, Kevin Hopgood, Mark O'Dell, Brian Williams** .....

Editorial

'Grimly, Detective O'MacJones von Homes pushed back the door with his .45. It snapped against the crumbling wood with a loud snap. "Drat, I should have used a .78. That will have alerted the fiends inside," he snarled. Inside, the alerted fiends threw a blanket over the image of the *thing* that was so terrible no-one ever spoke its name. They rushed forward, clutching their fission-laser-turbo-nasty-XR4i pistols, determined that dread Nh-jktl"prl"%%% would not be discovered.

Outside, the city was quiet....'

Ah! Those **Adventure Stories** of the Thirties and Forties; what **atmosphere** they had. Nothing **fancy** in those days; the **hero** was **tough** and **fearless**, the women were **beautiful**, and the **bad** guys were always **bad**. Printed in **cheap** magazines, with titles like **Shock!**, **Fall Over Backwards Tales** and **Pretty Neat Adventures**, these stories **provide** some of the **most exciting** role-playing around. So get out there and teach **The Hooded Claw** who's **boss**. History **will never** be the **same** again!

Paul Cockburn

Throughout this magazine, reference will be made to the D&D and AD&D games. Please note that all such references are to the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** or the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** fantasy adventure games, and that these and all other titles marked with a ® are registered trade marks owned by TSR Inc in the USA. ™ symbols indicate other Trade Marks owned by TSR Inc, with the exception of IMAGINE magazine, which is owned by TSR UK Ltd.

IMAGINE™ magazine is published monthly by TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. Telephone: (0223) 212517. Telex: 818761.

IMAGINE magazine is available from all good hobby shops and newsagents. It is distributed through the newstrade by Seymour Press Ltd, 334 Brixton Road, LONDON SW9 7AG. It is also available direct from the publisher by individual subscription. The subscription rate is £12 for twelve issues.

Back issues of IMAGINE magazine, where still available, can be bought directly from the above address for the price of £1.00 + 50p p&p per order — in the UK only. Payment must accompany all orders. Overseas please enquire separately. If one or more issues in an order are out of print, a credit note will be substituted which may be exchanged for cash or merchandise from the publisher.

The issue of expiry for each subscription will be printed on the subscriber's mailing label. Changes of address must be notified to the publisher at least 30 days before the effective change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

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IMAGINE magazine welcomes unsolic missions of written material and artwo However, no submissions will b accompanied by a stamped, se of sufficient size and postage. Und stances will the publi any sub

THE MASKED AVENGERS

An Introduction to Pulp Rolegames by **Paul Mason**

*'**Ferris tensed**, flattening his body against the rough rock of the cavern wall. His uncannily acute hearing had caught the sound of soft footfalls, approaching from the north. Could it be the High Priest, returning from his secret chamber? He prayed that it was. As the steps grew closer, Ferris prepared to strike. The ornate feathered head-dress of the High Priest poked inconguously into the chamber, and the Man of Iron leapt with all the power his steely sinews could muster. Xuatolep half-turned to face him, but could do nothing to ward off the attack of his avenging foe. Sophisticated though he may have been for a savage, the High Priest had no knowledge of modern wrestling techniques and was soon securely held in a full Nelson. He ceased struggling, realising that he could not escape Ferris's iron grip.*

"What have you done with Maria?" said Ferris, his face etched with ferocious intensity.

"She is beyond your power, mortal... she has been offered to the great god Tlalixat, and he has accepted her for his own..."

An anguished cry ripped itself from Ferris's lungs as he cast Xuatolep contemptuously to the floor. There was no time to bind him, if Maria was to be saved from the terrible fate that awaited her. A swift blow to the head sufficed to silence the evil despot, and the Man of Iron raced like a panther down the narrow corridor to the Temple, hoping the great god wasn't the impatient sort...'

Throughout the Great Depression of the twenties and thirties, such stirring tales of two-fisted adventure gave people some kind of escape from the tragedy and poverty of economic collapse. Referred to as 'Pulps' because of the quality of the paper used, these magazines packed in as much excitement as their authors could conceive. The heroes tended to be rugged individuals, fighting for truth, justice and the American way against the forces of evil in a variety of exotic locations. Their solutions to problems frequently consisted of a good solid upper cut to the jaw, yet on occasion they demonstrated remarkable deductive powers. All of which makes the pulps a perfect background to role-playing games for those bored with Sword and Sorcery. After all, they allow for many of the features which spice up more traditional rolegames, while retaining their own unique flavour and advantages — magic and mysticism, romance and action, detection and exploration. Yet the world in which they are set is our own. While the changes that have taken place in the world since 1930 are quite considerable, pulps can still provide the sense of danger that comes from encountering the remarkable in a familiar setting. Down a dungeon you *expect* to meet a fearsome monster intent on causing you severe bodily injury. Such a creature is a little more unusual and, dare I say it, more interesting, when locked in the upstairs room of an isolated New England mansion.

What is the most important feature of the pulps to bear in mind when looking at pulp rolegames? I'd say it was the *Sense of Wonder* that the stories induce. Pulps are not about skilful characterisation or complex plots — in form they bear a startling resemblance to the Western; goodies are good, baddies are evil, and no-one much cares how they got that way. A simpler world is being portrayed — one where everyone fits into one of three categories: good, uncommitted or rotten to the core. Pulp heroines' sole function is to be caught up in fell machinations so that the heroes of the stories can display extraordinary courage, talent, strength and so on in rescuing them. Pulp villains tend to be shifty foreign types, followers of some warped religion, or simply megalomaniacs. But, above all, the function of the pulp is to transport its reader into a 'better' world than the one we live in — one in which good will always defeat evil, thanks to the might of the defenders of the Truth.

Of the rolegames that involve the genre, only two are actually dedicated to covering the pulps in all their diversity. **Daredevils**, by FGU, and **Justice Inc**, by Hero Games, both apply an established game system to the whole spectrum of adventure to be had in the early twentieth century. **Daredevils** is based on the popular **Bushido** system, which involves allocating points to establish the primary attributes Wit, Will, Strength, Deftness, Speed and Health for a character. These are the lowest level of ability in the game — they are used when characters have no specialised skill or talent in an area. Characters also possess general talents in areas such as combat, science and communication, and they can learn specific skills from a vast array presented in the rules. Combat in the game is extremely tactical with players having to select character actions carefully every six-second turn. This will lead to long melees, but players who like realistic combat will find this game among the best. The game comes with the first book of adventure scenarios, ranked in order of difficulty, and there are other adventure packs available.

Justice Inc is a modified version of the system first encountered in **Champions**. Once again, characteristics are determined by allocating a number of points. The difference here is that the whole character is built up from a number of character points, which must be spent to add to base values in primary characteristics, skills, psychic powers and weird talents. Extra character points can be obtained by building in disadvantages to your character (for example, being hunted by the FBI) and this all helps to provide exactly the character you want, with plenty of background already established. Again, Justice Inc has a complex tactical combat system ideal for those who like their fights to have a bit of kick. It comes with a campaign book giving details of the world of the twenties and thirties, and four introductory scenarios.

In terms of what you get for your money, Justice Inc and Daredevils are very much alike, and choosing between the two would really be a matter of deciding which of the systems you prefer.

The other games that deal with the pulps tend to take one feature as their main attraction. TSR's **GANGBUSTERS™** game, for example, as its name suggests, concentrates on the gangsters of America — of whom Al Capone is the most famous. Thugs and G-Men battle it out again, with simple mechanics making the game easy to pick up and play.

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Chill, by Pacesetter, has as its theme the gothic horror epitomised by Bela Lugosi's *Dracula*. While it can be set at any time during the late nineteenth or twentieth century, it is perhaps most at home during the twenties, when the game won't get bogged down in the intricacies of modern technology. The system used, while needing a little thought initially, is much simpler than either Justice Inc or Daredevils and results in far less die-rolling and table-checking thanks to its streamlined design. While the single introductory scenario accompanying the basic game is rather weak, Pacesetter have made an effort to support their product with plenty of modules and other material. For my tastes, however, Chill is somewhat lacking in the kind of background detail that really makes the atmosphere of this sort of game. While plenty of room is given to SAVE, the anti-occult organisation to which all player characters belong, there is less effort at detailing the world — presumably because you're assumed to know all about it anyway!

Easily the most popular game of this period is **Call of Cthulhu** by Chaosium, a game which pits its characters against the eldritch horror of H P Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. The simple but realistic rules, extensive background detail and the curious appeal of the nightmare terrors themselves has made an irresistible combination for the game's many devotees. There are also plenty of good quality scenarios for Lovecraft fans not confident enough to create their own plotlines. In fact, Cthulhu set the standards in this area, and most games seem to have followed them quite closely.

Emphasis is given to producing a well-detailed player character with sufficient abilites to be able at least to attempt something in most instances of play. A Sourcebook for the 1920s is provided which gives all you need to know about the period, and there are a couple of ready-to-play scenarios to get you started on the right track.

How can other games compete with the tentacled terrors and unspeakable uglies that Lovecraft created? There is something almost poetic about the 'Sanity Roll' that the game brought to the world, which makes Cthulhu fans go misty-eyed in appreciation.

Finally, if anything can be said to have provoked modern interest in the genre of the pulps it is the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, which, with its sequel *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* gives the all-action Steven Spielberg/George Lucas treatment to Indiana Jones, Archaeologist Adventurer, and his fanatical adventures in far-flung corners of the globe. TSR's **ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES™** game gives you the chance to play the characters from the movies, and with the first two modules for the game you can even play through the plotlines of the two films! The game mechanics are simplicity itself to learn and use, although in places you may find the treatment of firearms a little odd — you have more chance of knocking somebody out with a punch in the chest than with a bullet wound at point blank range! If it were to be run as a campaign rather than simply as a series of disconnected scenarios, it would benefit from the kind of detail given in the other games. Still, if you like long combats with a distinct flavour of cinematic action then this will be the one for you.

It's not really surprising that game designers should have latched on the pulps as a genre suitable for rolegames — they have all the classic elements, and more. What has emerged from the games on the market, however, is the importance of background detail. The pulps depend entirely on atmosphere — without it a rolegame based on them is nothing. Pulps are all about escapism, and escapism requires that you are able to suspend your disbelief at what is going on in the story or game. The best way to succeed is to ensure that a game 'feels' authentic, and sustains sufficient interest to take a firm grip on the imagination. If you are interested in gaming in the Age of the Masked Avengers, then you'll get most inspiration from actually reading the stories themselves.

The following is a short list representative of the spirit of the pulps. Although some are out of print, many can be found in local libraries or old bookshops:

At the Mountains of Madness by H P Lovecraft. All Lovecraft's many works pile on the terror and provide invaluable inspiration for pulp games — not only Call of Cthulhu.

The *Doc Savage* series by Kenneth Robeson. Doc is the ultimate pulp hero — noble, rich, dynamic in action but nevertheless with a keen mind for deduction when it comes to crime solving.

The Incredible Adventures of Doc Dorgan by Robert E Howard. Renowned for his tales of Conan, Howard also brought to life many similarly heroic individuals in more modern periods of history.

She by H Rider Haggard. This tale of mysticism, adventure and romance in darkest Africa has been immortalised on film by Hammer. Technically not a pulp, it nevertheless captures the spirit of the pulps admirably.

The Spirit by Will Eisner. Eisner's legendary comic-book hero the Spirit has been reprinted twice — testimony to his enduring popularity.

Will Stone successfully wrest Maria from the clutches of the sinister man-god Tlalixat? Will Indiana Jones discover the legendary Ikons of Ikammanen? Will Sam Diamond escape the horrible death planned for him by the Servants of Cthulhu?

That's for you to discover!

Paul Mason

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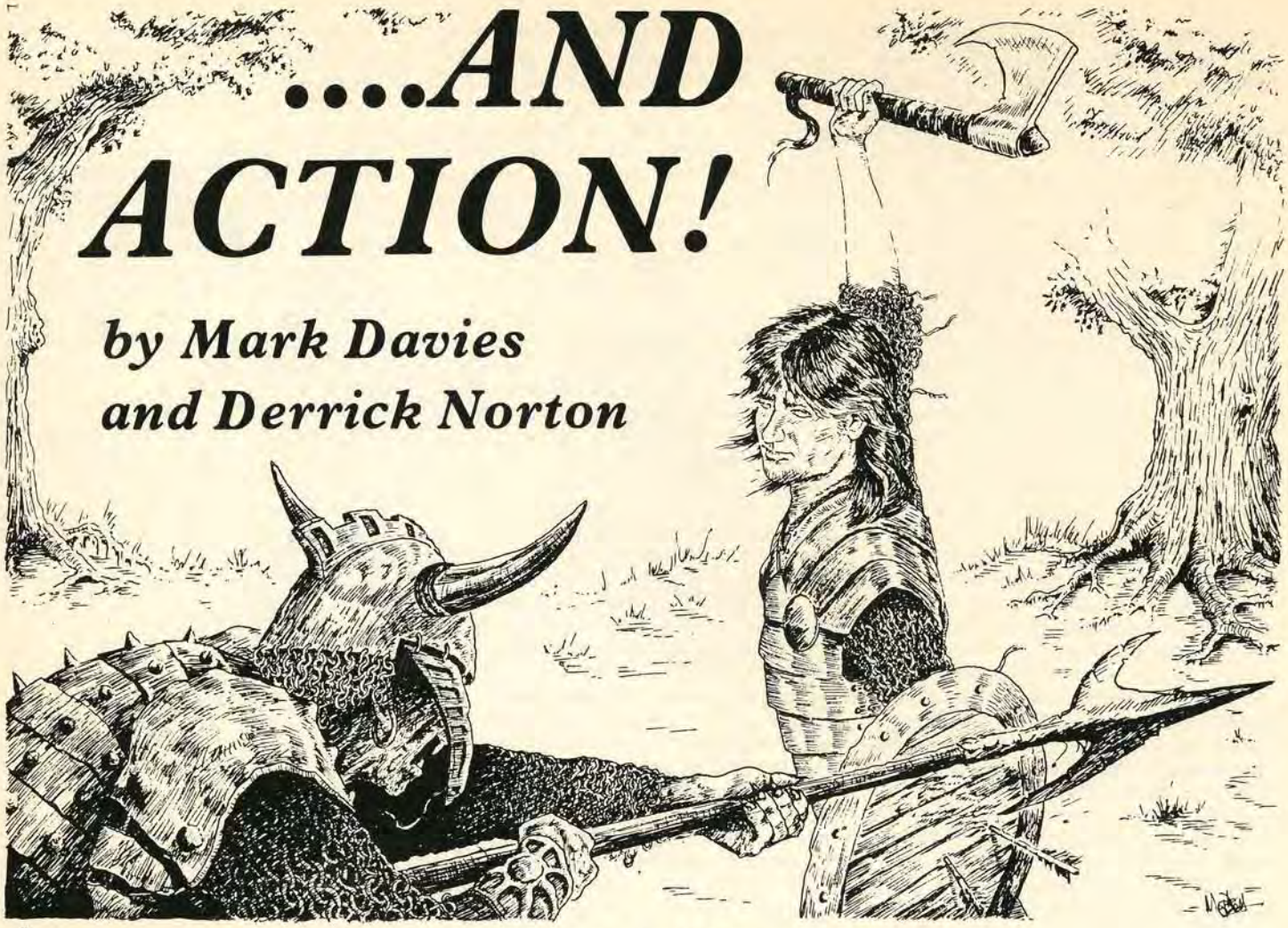
....AND ACTION!

by Mark Davies and Derrick Norton



A major appeal of the **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game is the ease with which combat is resolved. Most elements of the system work quite smoothly, with little sign of rules intruding into the players' view. Unfortunately, for all its other advantages, the system does have one flaw: the method of determining initiative.

In a theoretical sense, the use of a six-sided die to represent a 10-segment melee round is unsatisfactory. In a practical sense, the very simplicity of the system makes for much work as the DM resolves the many actions desired by the players. Merely deciding who has the initiative might not be enough — take the case of a monster charging an archer. If the monster wins, can he attack, unhindered; close up without being shot at; or must he take an arrow or two along the way?

It is usual for the DM to time such actions according to relative positioning within the melee round, not to any absolute reference point. To be performed effectively, this 'subjective determination' requires experience, but even then confusion and frustration can develop. Of course, DMing style and playing preference may complement the initiative approach. However, at least as far as the writers are concerned, the **AD&D®** game could benefit from a more rigorous treatment of melee.

Presented here is an alternative method of organising combat; the action system. In designing the system, care has been taken to try and reflect the present flavour of melee; that is, a relatively fast and uncluttered approach. Even so, the action system does open up new areas of rule-interpretation and some of these have been included for DMs' consideration.

Although the **D&D®** game has no 'segments', many of the principles of the action system can still be applied, with a little work. DMs must work out how long certain actions take, for example.

Running the Melee Round

To use the action system, a DM must run a segment-by-segment melee round (this need not be as tedious as it sounds). Starting with segment 1, the DM simply arrives at each segment, and resolves any actions that occur within it before proceeding to the next. Once the 10th segment has been resolved, new die rolls are made for the next round.

This method of organising combat demands a re-appraisal of certain time-rates; depending on the actual event or circumstance, the DM may wish to alter the limitation 'once every round' to the similar (but not identical) 'once every 10 segments'. For ease of handling, the former description is recommended.

A segment-by-segment treatment of melee gives the DM a new tool with which to regulate complex situations. It should be assumed that when a player states an intention to do something, the actual game-time segment under consideration pinpoints just when that player's character begins to perform the said action. Such a clause is implicit in the organisation of melee and should reduce the arguments concerning 'who-did-what-first' and so on. This does not detract from a DM's power of discretion. Indeed, an objective time-frame provides a DM with the means to consistently regulate play as seems fit.

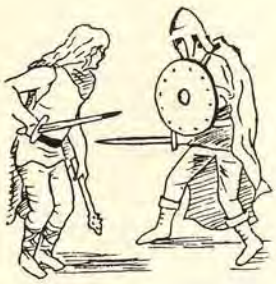
Melee

As with initiative, a melee round begins with a die roll. In the system's basic implementation the die used for this action-roll is a d10. Each PC involved in the combat has an action-roll and the number so obtained is the attack segment; that is, the segment in the forthcoming round during which the player may attack an opponent. Players will have to wait for the DM to reach the appropriate segment before rolling a to-hit die. A similar procedure is used to determine the timing of NPC/monster attacks, save that when dealing with large numbers, a DM should use discretion rather than make several action rolls. As normal, weapon attacks on the same segment can be ordered according to speed factor.

It must be emphasised that an action-roll is specific to the melee for which it was thrown. The number obtained may be redundant if the combat changes significantly.

As can be seen, the procedure does provide a player with advance information. With this in mind, a DM should not allow players to base character actions on information of which those characters would be unaware.

EXAMPLE 1
A fighter and an orc are in combat. The fighter has a (d10) action roll of 7, and the orc has a (d10) action roll of 3. Thus the orc attacks first on segment 3, followed by the fighter on segment 7.



Multiple Attacks

Creatures with more than one attack make an action-roll as normal. However, the number so obtained is then divided by its number of attacks to produced the required attack segments. Fractions are rounded up or down at the DM's discretion.

This procedure is limited by the consideration that, unless magicked, the same weapon or body-part cannot strike more than once per segment. Instead, such attacks are carried over to the next available segment.

Astute readers will have noticed that a more logical approach might have been to have a separate action roll for each attack. At times this could seriously complicate play, and so the process of division is strongly recommended.

EXAMPLE 2
A flesh golem has an action roll of 8; dividing by two indicates that it will attack once on segments 4 and 8.

EXAMPLE 3
A hook horror has an action roll of 1; it will attack twice on segment 1. A high-level fighter using a sword also has an action roll of 1; in this case the attacks will be made on segments 1 and 2. A fighter with two attacks by virtue of having two weapons would strike twice on segment 1.

EXAMPLE 4
A paladin is in combat with an ogre. On segment 4 of the melee, two allies of the paladin – a ranger and a cleric – arrive and engage the ogre. The ranger has an engagement roll of 4 and so may attack on the 8th segment. The cleric has an engagement roll of 7 and so will not be able to strike (since 4+7=11). At the commencement of the next round, all will make an action roll as normal.

Charging to Combat

Those doing the charging and those being charged should all be assumed to have an action roll of 1. All concerned will therefore attack on the first segment, with priority on this segment being given to the longest weapon or reach. Normal (action system) multiple attack rules apply, and charging modifiers are only relevant to attacks on the first segment.

Engagement During Melee

With the existing system, it is usual for creatures joining an ongoing melee to wait until the next initiative roll before having a chance to attack. This tactic does not work for the action system — too much can happen in a round to prohibit attacks because a creature arrived late! After all, the notion of the distinct round is itself hypothetical. So, given that a creature has not used up its attacks for a round, the following procedure can be employed. Whenever a creature engages another after the start of a melee round proper, the DM should make an engagement roll. The actual die roll used is the same as for the action roll, a d10. The result is then added to the current segment under consideration; that is, the game-time segment of actual engagement. If the sum is greater than 10, then the engaging creature will not be able to attack, but is nevertheless now engaged in the melee and is subject to attack as normal. A sum of 10 or less indicates the forthcoming segment when the engaging creature will be able to attack. Depending on the opponent's action roll, it may be subject to attack before the chance arrives. Creatures with multiple attack ability do not divide the result of the engagement roll, and irrespective of the number of attacks available to such a creature it may have only one strike on the appropriate segment. A creature with a non-special attack routine (claw/claw/bite) may choose which attack it will employ.

If a creature engages another, having first surprised its opponent, no engagement roll need be made. Instead, the creature is allowed one attack on the actual segment of engagement. After this strike, the creature will be engaged in combat, but is allowed no further attacks that round.

Fleeing

A creature can flee from combat at the start of the segment after the one in which the intention to do so was stated. With reference to Table 1, a creature will therefore flee before any action roll attacks on that segment either by itself or its opponent. However, as normal, any opponent is allowed a bonus strike.

Missile Discharge

Prepared missile weapons can be fired/thrown at the (unmagicked) rate of 1 per segment subject to the user's limit; there is no need to make an action roll. A missile user can thus choose to delay firing as seems fit — firing one arrow and retaining the other in case an enemy magic-user starts to cast a spell. Depending on range, a missile will strike towards the beginning of the segment (short range), the middle (medium), or towards the end (long). This reflects both flight-time and the need for greater concentration over longer distances.

Backstabbing and Assassination

Once in position, a thief or assassin may backstab/assassinate on any following segment chosen. If the target is already in melee, then — unlike the normal rules of engagement — a character in a position to perform a special attack will automatically gain a strike on the segment of engagement, irrespective of whether or not the target was surprised. Of course, special considerations will still affect the outcome of the attack. Should the victim survive, then the attacker will be engaged in combat, but may not strike again that round.

Turning Undead

With a symbol at hand, a cleric may begin to turn undead after the first segment of concentration.

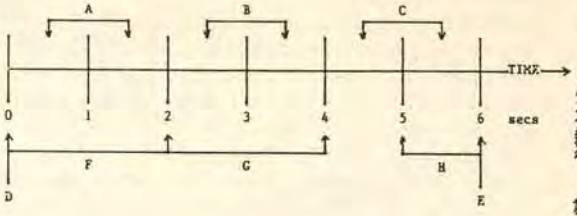
Spell-casting and Device Operation

The segment approach to melee allows a DM to determine the results of spell-casting and the like by simple arithmetic. A DM should decide first on the time required to bring the spell to mind, and to locate the material components. Spells and devices should always be assumed to be started at the beginning of a segment, and thus are usually completed at the very end of the last segment of casting.

General Notes

By now it should be clear that the use of segments within melee provides for a great deal of flexibility, allowing a DM to alter various aspects to suit playing style. It becomes possible to incorporate very short, but highly significant events without much confusion. This is a real bonus in refereeing critical situations where prompt action can influence life or death. In this respect, the action system can greatly increase the feeling of realism. As an overall description of the system, a schematic view of common events is given below. It should be used to determine the order of events within any particular segment.

Table 1:
General Sequence of Events Within a Segment



Notes
A: short-range missiles; bonus attacks on fleeing creatures
B: medium-range missiles
C: long-range missiles
D: spells started
E: spells completed
F: attempts to flee, backstab, assassinate; 'instant effects' (eg teleport)
G: normal weapon and body attacks
H: disengagement; turning undead

Additional Procedures

The action system, as outlined above, can serve as a complete method of organising combat. To some extent, this is a significant 'under-use' of the approach; far more could be included without undue complexity. Presented below are a number of independent procedures that exploit avenues opened by the use of segments. These procedures build on the basic system, such that the above rules apply except where it is stated otherwise.

The Action Roll and Combat Ability

As things presently stand (in both the initiative system and the action system), no distinction is made between a fighter's chance of attacking early in a melee as compared to that of a magic-user. Given that fighters in general possess a greater degree of martial prowess, this equality does not seem justified. To remedy the situation, a DM may wish to use the following procedure. The basic idea is that creatures with a low level of fundamental combat skill have a correspondingly low chance of attacking early in a melee.

i) all monsters, plus characters using the fighter attack-matrix, stick with a d10 for the action roll. This gives a base attack segment range of 1-10. The DM might wish to include monks in this category.
ii) characters using the cleric attack-matrix use d8 for the action roll and add 2 to the roll, giving a range of 3-10.
iii) characters using the thief attack-matrix have an action roll equal to d6+4; thus giving a base attack segment range of 5-10.
iv) 0-level characters, and those using the MU attack-matrix have an action roll equal to d4+6; producing a base attack segment range of 7-10.

Multi-classed characters use the most advantageous category.

EXAMPLE 5
A cleric/mage is fighting a magic-user. The cleric/mage throws a (d8+2) action roll of 5, whilst the MU throws a (d4+6) action roll of 8. Thus the cleric/mage will strike first on segment 5.

EXAMPLE 6
A fighter makes a (d10) action roll of 4. His opponent, a thief wielding two weapons, makes a (d6+4) action roll of 6. Dividing by two means that the thief will attack on segments 3 and 6. On segment 7, a cleric ally of the fighter joins combat; however a (d8+2) engagement roll of 6 means that the cleric cannot attack the thief this round (7+6=13).

EXAMPLE 7
A fighter wielding a battleaxe is in combat with a thief using a longsword and dagger. The fighter has a (Speed 7 = d8) action roll of 6, and the thief has a (Speed 5 = d6) action roll of 4. Dividing by 2 means that the thief will strike on segments 2 and 4. Just after the fighter's attack on segment 6, an MU ally of the thief arrives. Since the mage is using a staff with proficiency, the engagement roll would be on a d4.

EXAMPLE 8
An assassin using a morning star is faced with a cleric using a hammer; both are proficient in the weapon employed. The assassin therefore has a (Speed 7 = d8 + (thief) 4) action roll and the cleric has a d4 + (cleric) 2 action roll. If the assassin was not proficient with the morning-star, he would still use the d8 + 4 roll, since the weapon-related attack is the most disadvantageous. On the other hand, if the cleric was not proficient with the hammer, a d8+2 roll would be required, since in this case the class-related range is worst.

EXAMPLE 9
A fighter in platemail flees from a ghast. His chance of avoidance is given by 6"/15" x 10 = 4%. On the other hand, a ghast fleeing from the fighter would have a 15"/6" x 10 = 25% chance of avoiding the bonus attack.

It is important to note that a class minimum only applies to the initial action-roll; multiple attack considerations can produce attack segments below this value. Likewise, charging considerations will overide a class minimum.

The Action Roll and Weapon Speed

Players rarely pick one weapon over another because it is faster; the number of occasions when such a choice would be justified (equal initiative rolls) are too infrequent to provide sufficient cause. The following procedure attempts to elevate weapon speed to a more prominent position. A DM should note that the procedure is only relevant when both sides are employing a weapon. For the purposes of this account, a fist cannot be classed as a weapon, otherwise one would also have to determine the speed factor of all natural weapons for monsters. The effort this would entail does not seem worthwhile (although the degree of expertise involve in a monk's open hand attack may prompt a DM to regard it as an exception to this rule).

In weapon vs weapon combat, the inclusion of speed is achieved by substituting the action roll die used by a character to a die related to the weapon's speed factor. Thus the use of a scimitar would involve a d4 action roll, whereas a glaive would require a d8 action roll. For odd-numbered speed factors the next highest die-type should be used, re-rolling if the maximum value was thrown. Note that although the speed factor of a pike is 13, its sheer length precludes its use in standard weapon vs weapon melee anyway.

Since (apart from the pike) all weapons speeds are 10 or less, then use of a weapon-related action roll in the basic system would never penalize a character. With this in mind, a character must be proficient with the weapon in order to benefit from the change in die, otherwise a normal (d10) roll should be made. If two weapons are being wielded, then the speed of each is determined by the die applicable to the slowest.

The procedure for incorporating weapon speed factor has so far related only to the basic action system. If the rules concerning class-related action rolls are to be used, then the following considerations are also of relevance.

In weapon vs weapon combat, the die used for the action roll or engagement roll is determined as outlined above in this section, except that a creature not proficient with a weapon will use the most disadvantageous category; that is a class-related or weapon-related roll, whichever is the worst in this respect. In all cases, use of a weapon-related die roll will require a similar modification as seen for the class-related roll (ie, 0 for fighters, +2 for clerics, +4 for thieves and +6 for MUs). Any die + modifier sum that is greater than 10 for a given action roll should be treated as a 10. Such a sum for an engagement roll still prohibits the character from attacking that round.

Fleeing

The resolution of melee in segments means that the movement rate becomes important even over short distances. With this in mind, it seems reasonable to allow relatively fast creatures a chance to avoid the bonus strike when fleeing by virtue of sheer speed. This 'chance of avoidance' is calculated by dividing the fleeing creature's movement rate by that of the opponent, and multiplying the result to give a percentage. If a fleeing creature fails this roll, then a bonus strike is attempted as normal.

The DM should take account of any relevant movement factors. For example, a creature able to leap away from combat could be assumed to have an effective movement rate greater than normal.

Disengagement

It is often an arguable point that in order to leave combat a creature must either flee or die; no in-between option is available. This situation can be altered by introducing the idea of 'disengagement'; a sort of gradual retreat that is not affected by movement rate. Of course, such an action would require preparation, and so a player must state the intention of the character to retreat before the start of the melee round. To determine just when disengagement can occur, an appropriate action roll is made. However, in this instance, the segment so obtained indicates the time when the creature can disengage; there is no dividing through by number of attacks. A creature must also have a willing ally engaged with the opponent on the segment of disengagement — it is this ally that keeps the opponent busy. Any attempts to leave combat in circumstances other than these should be classed as fleeing.

The advantage of disengaging is that opponents do not gain any bonus attacks. Even so, reference to Table 1 shows that disengagement occurs at the end of the appropriate segment, and thus a creature may be subject to attacks from an opponent. The creature itself cannot attack during this round, naturally. If the opponent wishes to remain in combat with the retiring creature, that opponent must effectively flee from the disengager's ally.

Missile Fire into Melee

In this alternative to the DMG method, the idea is that at random times during the round, an opening should occur in a melee that allows a missile user a clear shot at an opponent. Firing at such a time presents no danger to any ally in the melee, whereas firing at any other time does. This approach is facilitated by the 'real time' nature of the action system, and allows a missile user a degree of choice not previously possible.

To determine if and when a suitable opening will occur, the DM should roll a die, and add the result to the current segment; that is the segment when the missile user is ready to fire. The actual die used should be determined by the DM. If he thinks the melee would not present many clear openings, then a large range should be used (eg, d12 or 2d4). On the other hand, in a slow-paced combat between two large creatures, an opening might occur more readily. Whatever, the DM makes the roll and if the result is greater than 10, there is no clear target that round. A sum of 10 or less indicates the segment on which the chance occurs. Naturally, the DM does not inform the player of this result in advance....

On the indicated segment (assuming a result of 10 or less), the character must act quickly. The shot must be made from close range, and only one is allowed. If the shot misses, the fact that the missile user awaited a clear opportunity means that his ally will not be hit. This could create considerable tension, as the archer faces the dilemma of waiting for a safe segment that might never arise, or that might arise after the enemy has struck the archer's ally down (and there might be a case for having the DM make all action rolls and engagement rolls so that players never know whether they or their enemies have the advantage — until it happens!), or of firing anyway — possibly hitting that poor ally. There should be a base chance of at least 50% of this happening, with the DM making modifications to take account of relative positioning, size and other variables.

Finale

The writers would like to end by answering the question, 'why use the action system?' This demands some hard-sell; after all the initiative roll is an ingrained part of play.

At the heart of the system is the idea that a melee round should be treated segment-by-segment; to some extent all the other factors are irrelevant. It is this procedure that facilitates the systems's other attributes, in two ways. First, one can see that the method takes account of events not properly dealt with by initiative alone (spell casting and weapon speeds, for example); second, the approach increases the DM's control and a player's involvement in melee.

The former of these points means that combat becomes much easier to resolve and understand, even when multiple attacks combine with backstabs, spells, etc. The latter point stems from the much-needed removal of the initiative side-effect of 'first strike superiority' (ie, all the attacks of all the characters on one side going in first). There is a third advantage. The system is extremely adaptable. A DM can use the segment-by-segment framework as a base on which to develop other ideas. One can imagine new magic items such as **gauntlets of striking** that aid early attacks.

In conclusion, it is noted that the action system will not be to everyone's tastes; no one system could hope to do that. Even so, it is considered that the system is sufficiently structured to act as a viable alternative to traditional procedures.

Mark Davies & Derrick Norton

EXAMPLE 10

A cleric is fighting a bugbear. On segment 3 a fighter ally of the cleric is ready to fire arrows. The DM decides that the situation requires a d6 roll, and obtains a 4 – there will be a clear shot at the bugbear on segment 7. On segment 6, with the bugbear still not having struck, the fighter loses his nerve and fires anyway, and the DM rolls percentiles after he misses....

Credits

The writers gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by Dave Clarke and Mark Coulson. Thanks also to Lee Coulbeck, Tanya Lee, Duncan McNeillie and Mark Sheldrick.

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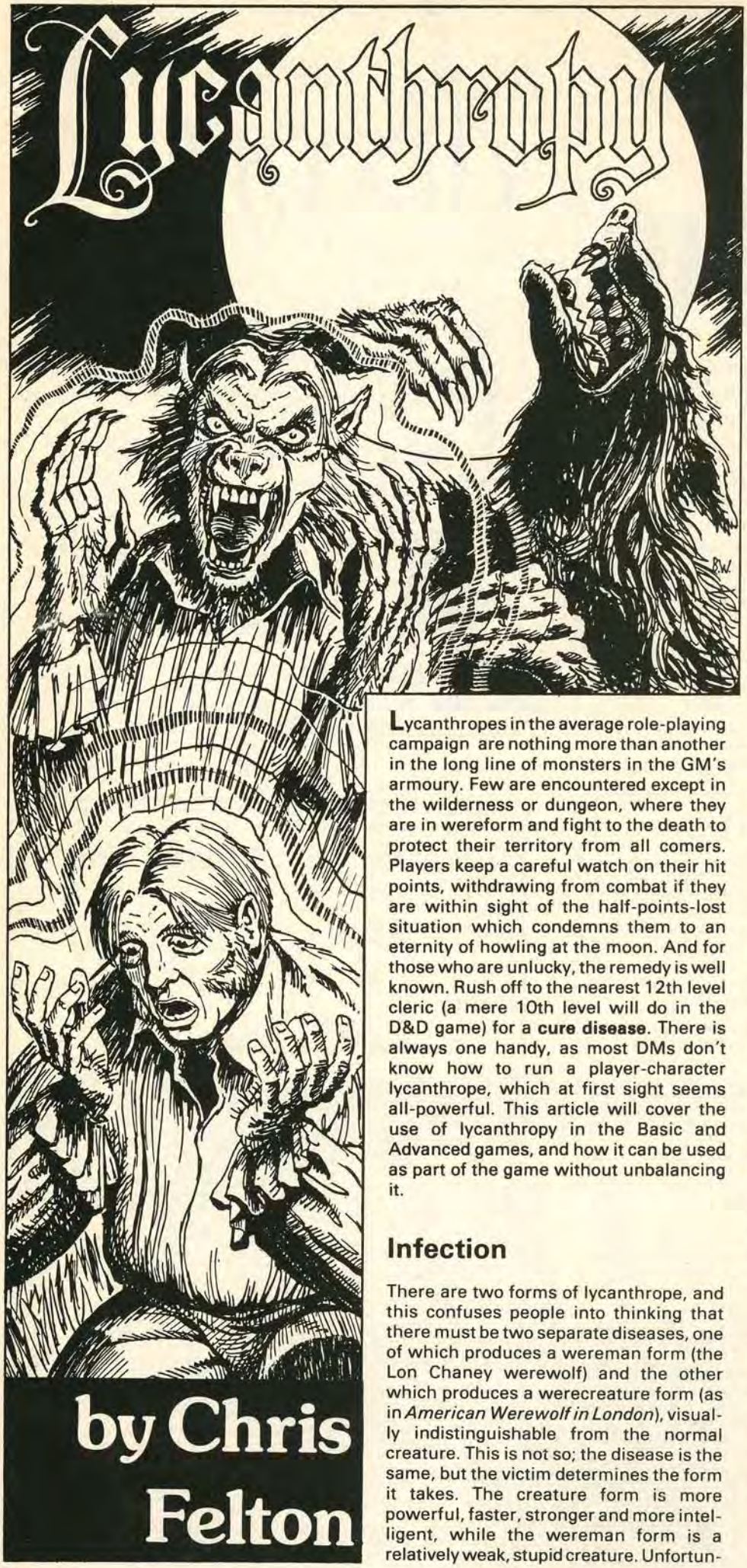
Lycanthropy



by Chris Felton

Lycanthropes in the average role-playing campaign are nothing more than another in the long line of monsters in the GM's armoury. Few are encountered except in the wilderness or dungeon, where they are in wereform and fight to the death to protect their territory from all comers. Players keep a careful watch on their hit points, withdrawing from combat if they are within sight of the half-points-lost situation which condemns them to an eternity of howling at the moon. And for those who are unlucky, the remedy is well known. Rush off to the nearest 12th level cleric (a mere 10th level will do in the D&D game) for a **cure disease**. There is always one handy, as most DMs don't know how to run a player-character lycanthrope, which at first sight seems all-powerful. This article will cover the use of lycanthropy in the Basic and Advanced games, and how it can be used as part of the game without unbalancing it.

Infection

There are two forms of lycanthrope, and this confuses people into thinking that there must be two separate diseases, one of which produces a wereman form (the Lon Chaney werewolf) and the other which produces a werecreature form (as in *American Werewolf in London*), visually indistinguishable from the normal creature. This is not so; the disease is the same, but the victim determines the form it takes. The creature form is more powerful, faster, stronger and more intelligent, while the wereman form is a relatively weak, stupid creature. Unfortunately for the lycanthrope, the wereman form is the easiest to attain, and it takes practice and strength of mind to transform into the werecreature.

Returning to the initial moment when the disease is contracted, it is clear that the system whereby half the character's hit points must be lost for the disease to occur is open to abuse. Characters will watch their hit points to judge the moment when they are ripe to be made into werewolves and then retreat. Clerics will throw in cures, just to prevent the magic 50% mark being reached. Alternatively, the 30 hit point fighter who has taken 12 points of damage from a trap at the entrance to the lair, is surprised and nibbled by a werewolf for 4 points — and hey presto, exit PC fighter, enter DM-run werewolf.

To get round this, the DM should rule that anyone so much as scratched by a lycanthrope can catch the disease, with the chance calculated as the percentage of hit points lost to the creature's attacks. This way, the PC will finish the fight without knowing whether the infection has taken hold or not. Regardless of cures, other damage taken or any other factors, wounds caused by a were-being will leave the virus in the bloodstream, and the risk of disease is there. For the fighter above, instead of an automatic transfer to the howling brigade, the risk is 13% (4 from 30hp lost); for the point-counting player, not a failsafe method for staying out of trouble, but a real danger....

This risk applies to all situations when a character is damaged by a were-being, although the DM should only allow 10% of the normal chance (ie, just 1% for our friend the fighter) when the carrier is a weretiger. The disease manifests itself as mild fevers and chills in all damaged characters, while their bodies are fighting the disease, for 4-40 days — whether or not the character is finally to become a lycanthrope. This could mean that it might be the second or even the third full moon after the original incident before the disease has its traditional effect.

Only humans and half-humans (half-elves and half-orcs) can be lycanthropes. DMs will have to decide whether paladins will be shielded from the disease by their God, or if monks who are immune to other diseases are immune to the more vigorous bugs of lycanthropy. Clearly, those already suffering from one form of the disease are immune to subsequent infection.

The First Transformation

Whatever the result of the DM's roll to decide whether or not the character is infected, the DM should keep it a secret, and the player should continue to run an infected PC. The victim will realise that he is infected after the first change has happened. Whatever the circumstances (although it will clearly be easier for the DM to handle if this occurs during an

inactive part of the campaign, not on an adventure), the DM should inform the player that the character wakes up on the morning after the full moon, naked, and far from habitation. The player will probably be bright enough to link this up with the rumours that will be buzzing around town; rumours of a fell beast stalking the streets, its muzzle dripping the blood of a late-night reveller.

The character will realise that he is a lycanthrope.

Table 1

Lvl	xp	Resist Moon	Resist Stress	Change To Wereman	Change To Creature	Communicate
1	0-1700	⅓Ego	½Ego	⅓Ego	1%	3%
2	1701-3500	½Ego	Ego	½Ego	2%	8%
3	3501-7000	Ego	2xEgo	Ego	5%	17%
4	7001-14,000	2xEgo	3xEgo	2xEgo	⅓Ego	28%
5	14,001-28,000	3xEgo	4xEgo	3xEgo	½Ego	42%
6	28,001-56,000	4xEgo	5xEgo	4xEgo	Ego	58%
7	56,001-120,000	5xEgo	6xEgo	5xEgo	2xEgo	78%
8	120,001-240,000	6xEgo	7xEgo	6xEgo	3xEgo	100%

(etc — 240,000xp per level above 8th)

Notes

Ego: Ego = INTELLIGENCE + CHARISMA + LEVEL. This reflects the personality of the character, and the measure of control over transformations.

Resist Moon: This is the chance that the character can resist the change to wereform while under the light of the full moon. Under stress conditions, this will vary downwards in the same way as the resist stress chance does, although unlike resist stress it will never vary upwards. The percentage roll should be made every two hours during the night, or at every increase in the level of stress. If the character is asleep, Ego is effectively 0.

Resist Stress: In addition to rampaging about under the light of the full moon, the character must also face the possibility of a change into wereform while in a stressful situation (combat, arguments, etc). The DM may impose penalties or bonuses according to the situation. If the character is in a situation where the transformation would be easily observed by other characters, then the DM should secretly inform the player of his impending plight, and have the character retreat from sight.

Change To Wereman: This gives the percentage chance of transforming into wereman form in the absence of the usual stimuli. If a character undergoing an involuntary change does not try to go into creature form, this represents the chance of retaining control of the wereman's actions. Note that where this roll is failed, and the character is out of control, the DM should decide what the course of the character's actions will be, but that if it is made, the player may continue to run the character, with some control over the disease. In time this will make little difference, as the character will have become as nasty as the werebeing. Note also that where the player does not retain control of the wereman, the character will awake after the transformation is ended with no memory of what has occurred in the interim.

Change To Creature: This gives the chance of transforming completely into the creature form, either voluntarily or during an involuntary change. If this roll fails, the character becomes a DM-controlled wereman. Note that the player will retain control of a werecreature if the change was voluntary.

Communication: This gives the lycanthrope's chance of being able to converse with other members of the wereform's family (a weretiger to any cat, a werewolf to any dog, etc) while in human form. The chance is tripled while the character is in werecreature form — weremen can't communicate with anyone! Only simple concepts can be discussed — remember their animal intelligence.

Growing Pains

From now on the character will lead a dual existence. The player will continue to run the character during those times when it is in human form. The DM must make it clear to the player that the other players are not to be told of the transformation, or drop heavy-handed hints. Nor should the character allow situations to occur where the transformation into the werecreature can be observed by others. Only if the other players or an NPC put two and two together, will the problem be recognised. In all respects save one, the PC will continue exactly as before, except during periods of transformation, when the DM will take charge. Naturally, this will be done out of earshot of other players — the PC's 'alternative' career can easily be run at times outside the normal gaming sessions. The only exception to the player's continuing control is over the matter of alignment. Secretly, the character's alignment should be shifted gradually towards the creature's; the more the character can voluntarily make the change into a werecreature, the more that character will enjoy and abuse this frightening power....

While in wereform, the character will begin a new career. It will continue to gain experience points as before, but now this will be logged against the werebeing character. The two characters must be kept separate. Obviously, the werebeing will get no experience for treasure — such creatures will have no use for such things. Their career will only be advanced by combat.

The werebeing will progress as victims fall, as shown in Table 1. The various terms are explained below.

Goneoff The Grubby — an Example In Action

Goneoff the Grubby (orcslayer extraordinaire from **IMAGINE** magazine, #10) suffered a small mishap some while ago, and is now a 6th level MU/4th level wereboar. His player has been thoroughly briefed over the last few weeks, and knows exactly what is expected. The MU has developed quite solitary habits, much to the amazement of his fellow PCs, and has even developed a tendency to act quite arbitrarily in his own interests.

For once, Goneoff has been caught out on an adventure at the time of the full moon. He knows exactly what this means. The DM calculates the chance of Goneoff resisting the transformation — his Intelligence is 14, his Charisma 10, giving him an Ego of 30. As a 4th level wereboar this

gives him a (2xEgo) 60% chance of evading the change, but the DM takes account of the fact that Goneoff is arguing energetically with his fellow watchmen about the division of treasure, and reduces his effective were-level by one. Now the chance is just 30%. Goneoff is lucky, the roll is made, and he retains human form.

But as the night goes on, orcs attack the camp, and the DM decides on a two-level penalty, allowing Goneoff just a (½Ego) 15% chance of stopping the change. At the same moment, Goneoff decides that this confused melee might be the best time to attempt a voluntary change, steps back from the fight, and tries for wereboar form (⅓Ego — 10%). He fails this roll, and the DM takes over control of the wereman form. The following morning, Goneoff sneaks back to the camp, trying to concoct a story about being captured and escaping, and finding that his fellow PCs are complaining bitterly about a savage attack by the orcs and some hairy, grunting, man-like thing — and now one of them has some kind of fever....

Weremen of the World

The partial transformation of a lycanthrope involves the character becoming a wereman; far less powerful than the complete werebeing, but still offering a dangerous challenge (and in this form, as well as a complete werebeing, the lycanthrope can pass on the disease to others). A few wereman forms are given below, along with the existing stats for the relevant werecreature, and two new werecreatures, just for the sake of it:

Table 2

Creature	AD&D AC	Move	HD	Attacks	SA	D&D AC	Move	HD	Attacks	SA
Werebear	2	9"	7+3	1-3/1-3/2-8	Hug 2-16	2	120'	6*	2-8/2-8	Hug 2-16
Bearman	6	11"	4+1	1-2/1-2/1-3	Hug 2-8	6	150'	4*	1-6/1-6	Hug 2-8
Wereboar	4	12"	5+2	2-12		4	150'	4+1*	2-12	
Boarman	7	12"	3+1	1-6		7	150'	3*	1-6	
Weretiger	3	12"	6+2	1-4/1-4/1-12	Rake 2-5/2-5	3	150'	5*	1-6/1-6/1-12	
Tigerman	7	12"	3+1	1-2/1-2/1-6	Rake 1-2/1-2	7	150'	2+1*	1-3/1-3/1-6	
Werewolf	5	15"	4+3	2-8		5	180'	4*	2-8	
Wolfman	8	13"	2+2	1-6		8	150'	2*	1-6	
Werejaguar	6	15"	5+2	1-3/1-3/1-8	Rake 2-5/2-5	6	180'	5*	2-5/2-5/1-8	
Jaguarman	8	13"	3+1	1-2/1-2/1-4	Rake 1-3/1-3	8	150'	3*	1-4/1-4/1-6	
Werelion	5	15"	6+3	1-4/1-4/1-10	Rake 2-7/2-7	5	180'	6*	1-6/1-6/1-12	
Lionman	8	13"	3+3	1-3/1-3/1-6	Rake 1-4/1-4	8	150'	3*	1-4/1-4/1-8	

Ratmen in both systems are the usual forms — the full rat-form is rarely used except for disguise. When in this form they attack as giant rats.

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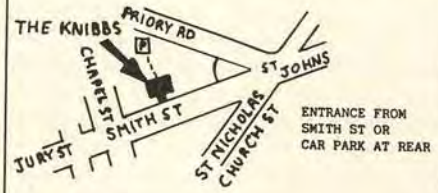

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Healing

The DM will have to decide just how hits to one form of the character affect the others. One of the disturbing things about a werecreature whose hit points are kept separate for each form is that fighting one means taking on three quite different opponents, as the lycanthrope swaps from one form to another. This can't happen during a melee of course, as the transformation takes from 1-3 rounds to occur. One addition rule that can be introduced is to have a werecreature recover d12 hit points when reverting to an already-wounded form (the transformation repairs damage in the same way as does a **polymorph self** spell).

Unfortunately, the body's energy reserves are so depleted by this process that each form can only be 'repaired' once per day. However, wereforms will repair themselves even when their 'owner' stays in human form, regaining 1hp per HD of the basic wereform per day (thus an unused werebear form will recover 7hp per day). Both these abilities become very important when you consider that curative spells do not affect creatures who cannot be hit by normal weapons (Advanced game only — **PH**, p43). In wereman or werecreature form, lycanthropes are immune to normal weapons, although they can be hit by any creature of 4+1 or more hit dice (**DMG**, p75).

Pets Look Like Their Masters

It is a well-known fact (among lycanthropes, anyway) that lycanthropes in their human form become more and more like their wereform as time goes by. Not only do they come to look like their forms, but their attributes become more like their species' characteristics. Each wereform has two prime attributes which are improved as the character rises in werelevel. These are:

	First	Second
Werebear:	Constitution	Strength
Wereboar:	Constitution	Strength
Werejaguar:	Dexterity	Speed
Werelion:	Strength	Speed
Wererat:	Dexterity	Intelligence
Weretiger:	Dexterity	Strength
Werewolf:	Constitution	Strength

The wereforms improve with rises in level, as a wily, battlescarred, old werewolf is obviously harder to kill than one who has only just caught the disease. The timetable of improvements is set out in Table 3.

Table 3

Lvl	Attribute Changes First	Attribute Changes Second	Improvement to Wereman form	Improvement to Creature form	Alignment Shift
1					
2	+1				1 place
3					
4		+1			(1 place)
5			+1hp		
6	+1		+1HD		1 place
7			+1hp		
8		+1	+1HD	+2hp	(1 place)
9			+1hp	+1HD	
10	+1		+1HD	+2hp	
11			+1hp	+1HD	

Where the second attribute improvement is Speed, each point of increase is a 1" (30' in Basic) improvement to the movement rate for human and wereman form, up to the maximum possible by the werecreature. No attribute increase can take the human form past 18.

The alignment shift column shows how the creature's alignment affects that of the human form. The character's alignment will shift towards the creature's at the indicated levels (in Basic, the parenthesised increases are ignored). In Advanced, the alignment change will not occur 'diagonally' across the range (as **PH**, p119), but the character may choose which way it shifts if there are two equally short routes from the original alignment to that of the werecreature. A LG character could attempt to remain Lawful for as long as possible (LG-LN-LE-NE-CE), or Good for as long as possible (LG-NG-CG-CN-CE), or make the change across both axes gradually (LG-NG-N-CN-CE, or others).

NPC Lycanthropes

Lycanthropes are almost always found outside cities and large towns, as the nature of their disease makes them hated and feared, and any werecreature slinking through the streets would start a hue-and-cry which would be very hazardous. In the long run, it will be very difficult for a lycanthrope to hide the fact. The more time spent in wereform, the more chance of being discovered. Thus, after an initial period in which the victim could continue a relatively 'normal' existence, the lycanthrope would have to move on. Also, werecreatures will prefer the habitats of their normal counterparts. The exceptions to this are wererats, who prefer to live in a city, spending their human existence in a normal home, and their werelife in tunnels radiating from that building. Being cunning, these passages will be mazelike and end in secret doors to allow them a 'secret identity'. A wererat would be difficult to track down, as it could leave the remains of its victims among the piles of rubbish and filth where they would be seldom found, and where the bodies of victims of other deeds and circumstances would lie as well.

Other werecreatures are similarly secretive. Peasants are notoriously superstitious. They will make no distinction between 'good' lycanthropes, fighting the disease that is gradually forcing them closer to nature, or 'evil' ones. Only those lycanthropes living far out in the wilderness would be immune to this need for secrecy.

By the time the lycanthrope can automatically make the change into wereform, it will be living amongst members of the same werespecies, just as if they were a 'pride' of the normal creature. It is arguable whether the children of lycanthrope parents would have the disease or not — they probably would, but it might manifest itself as a permanent taking of the wereform.

The 'family' would enjoy living among creatures of their werespecies' family — werewolves among dogs, for example. The normal creatures would probably accept the leadership of this powerful, intelligent neighbour.

Apart from as a defence mechanism (and, in rare cases, to find a mate or companion) lycanthropes will not normally go out of their way to infect others. Normally victims will be pursued until dead. It is this alone that has kept the numbers of lycanthropes low, and has restricted the number of species to which it has spread, but there may be unique cases of lycanthropy amongst even the most fantastic of beasts — a freak in the development of the disease. Never underestimate the extent to which the disease can become a part of an ecology, and you may find your players treating their wounds with a lot more care than ever before.

Chris Felton

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Access

PELINORE

The Gods of the Domains

by Chris Felton
and Paul Cockburn

Two months ago, we published information on the Gods most likely to be known to player characters as they get on with their careers in the City League, Cerwyn and the Domains. From that information, GMs and players should have been able to work out how to run clerics, temples and religions; this month we concentrate on the deities themselves.

The Nature of the Gods

The articles in #23 on **The Big Wide World** and #26, **The Gods of Pelinore** showed something of the nature of the world, its gods and religions. DMs running high-level campaigns, or campaigns with a strong religious flavour might want more detail, and this section completes our coverage of the subject.... for now.

Pelinore as a physical place exists in a near-void. Beyond the Rim, existence has no meaning. Individual DMs should interpret this in any way they choose, for some high-level campaigns might wish to make this 'void' the source of extra-dimensional or temporal adventures. But whatever is beyond the edge of the world, that is where the Immortals came from, attracted to Pelinore because of its physical reality. The Gods are immortals, because nothing can ever happen to their 'true selves'; those Gods who suffer 'death' while meddling in Pelinore merely return to the void and continue as before.

The Gods were initially quite powerless to act in this new world, except to use it as a place for their own encounters of love and hate, but it proved possible for them to do much more once intelligent beings began to believe in them. At this point, they became deities as we think of them, able to alter physical reality, either directly, or through their servants. Each took on some aspect; the sky, war, love, weather — many aspects proving popular, and being duplicated. The Gods worshipped in the Domains are merely the strongest in that part of Pelinore, where they are supported by believers and clerics. Elsewhere, there might be another Sky-God than Tarmanel, and should the worship of a God wane, that God will become steadily less powerful to do anything about it (as in the case of Malsenn, #26, **Tellhalter**).

It is through the influence of Gods that Pelinore has become the way it is. Individual Gods find it difficult to hold large numbers of followers over vast tracts of land. Thus Gods, and therefore religions, temples and clerics, tend to be concentrated in specific places. Where a particular God, or group of Gods, are particularly influential, such a place can take on the 'character' of the deities concerned; thus the Theocratic Principalities, ruled by deities of Lawful/Lawful Good alignment, are an area where acts of Chaos just do not occur. There are many other areas of an 'extreme' nature, and, of course, there is constant struggle between the Gods for supremacy. As already has been seen, in the Domains, and even beyond Bereduth, the greatest of these struggles is between Tarmanel and Pharastus, but there are many others.

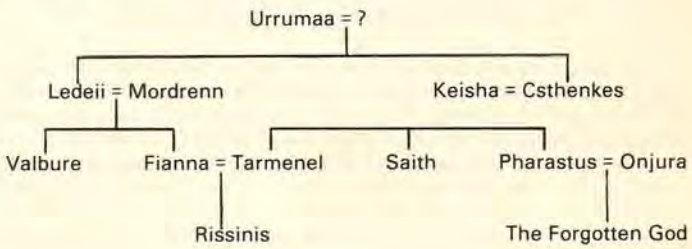
All this poses one question for player character clerics; how do they get their spells? Spells can still be treated as power granted to the most loyal servants of a deity to further that deity's objectives. That power will still be available, even when clerics are far from home, unless they are in a place completely dominated by a differing alignment. Otherwise, the only difference is that it will be virtually impossible to find a temple or clerics of your religion. Other clerics, worshipping a God of the same aspect and alignment as yours, might help, or they might think your God was trying to make a take-over bid!

The Story of the Gods

In the early days of Time, the God Urrumaa moved Hubwards from the Rim. Coming as far Hubwards as he dared — the powers of Gods are lessened close to Worldheart — he found the area now known as the Domains sparsely populated by Gods. Only the ancient deity who appeared as the Green Man and Gnome-God Maggirumnar were in the area, but many Humans were moving in at the same time. Urrumaa, probably with a mate, produced two children: a daughter Ledeii, whom he placed in charge of the laws of humans; and a son, Csthenkes, whom he made responsible for their freedoms. Since the humans seemed to need something to follow, this, he believed, would provide it for them.

But this wasn't enough for the humans. They needed more than just laws and freedom, so from the Gods of Dontaldur and the Splintered Lands Urrumaa found a God of Love, Mordrenn, to marry Ledeii, and a Goddess of War, Keisha, to marry Csthenkes, and represent the other concerns of mortal life. Mordrenn and Ledii had two children, again one boy and one girl. Eldest was the girl, Fianna, who learned both her parents' skills and by tempering Law with Love became the Goddess of Judgement. Their son Valbure was apprenticed to Maggirumnar to bring the Humans and Gnomes closer together, and from this apprenticeship Valbure became a great swordsmith.

Keisha and Csthenkes had three sons. The eldest, Tarmenel, became the God of the Sky and married the beautiful Fianna. Together, they had one son, Rissinis, who took over the responsibility for the weather over the sea from his father. The middle son, Saith, studied his mother's arts of war but rejected his father's belief in the importance of freedom, choosing instead the path of discipline. Their third son, Pharastus, was annoyed at the popularity of his brothers and lack of any clear area of responsibility for him to take on, and he grew up bitter and vengeful. He began associating with non-humans and their Gods — the Orcs and Giants. Seeing that Pharastus was unhappy, his parents went back to Keisha's kin for a suitable bride, a beautiful Sea Goddess called Onjura. For a while, Pharastus was happy, and the world was a rich and peaceful place, and during this time Pharastus and Onjura produced one child, who was later to become the Forgotten God.



Onjura's arrival was ultimately to change both the Gods and World. The seas around the Domains were the province of a sahuagin God now known to humans as Abex/Srittinna. The sea-elf worshippers who followed Onjura to the Domains found themselves in a bad position — although the sahuagins were not unfriendly, they would not allow the sea-elves to move into their territory. Incident followed incident, and gradually relationships deteriorated, until the sahuagins and sea-elves were at war, killing each other whenever they got the chance — a war which is still going on. Onjura appealed for help for her worshippers from the other Gods, but only Pharastus made any real effort to help her, and he had few worshippers. The other Gods pointed out that their followers were helpless beneath the water, so Onjura's elves died. The formerly bright, happy sea-Goddess became a grim, unhappy deity mourning her losses.

Enraged by what he saw as their callous abandoning of the elves, Pharastus decided to revenge himself on the other Gods by calling upon the worshippers of his friends to attack the human lands. Many and great were the battles of that era, and they were not all in the World! Hardest hit were Ledeii (who had said "They are in the wrong, they are invading the sahuagin lands") and Maggirumnar (whose followers occupied the lands most desired by the Orcs and Giants), both of whom were so weakened by the rush of sneak attacks on their worshippers that the combined might of Pharastus and the Orc and Giant gods was enough to vanquish them. The defeat of these two caused the rest of the Gods to unite to crush the rebellion, although not all of them joined in whole-heartedly: Keisha assisted both sides by spreading rumours, both true and false, and advice on battle-tactics; Csthenkes, seeing civil war between his sons, was unsure of what to do, and stood by and dithered; and, of course, no-one knows which side the Forgotten God was on.

Gradually, painfully, the Gods crushed their foes, revenging themselves on the Orc and Giant gods and doing their best to devise some way of killing Pharastus (the Gods are nothing if not resilient and the Gods of the Orcs and Giants have re-emerged, probably through the persistence of their followers; but they now confine their affairs to those of the non-human deities who have their own petty squabbles). It is a measure of the frustration and anger of the alliance that they even attempted the impossible — the killing of a God. Keisha argued for banishment instead, and so it was that Pharastus was sent to Shadowland, the lands of the Dead. Frustrated at his survival, the other gods turned on Keisha and, as appropriate punishment, tore her into three parts, so that in future she could side whole-heartedly with both sides in a dispute (although the effect of this on her powers meant that it wouldn't really matter which side she was on). The three resulting entities, Grea, Hrea, and Trea, were each impregnated to prevent them re-fusing.

Mordrenn, severely weakened by the loss of most of his clerics (who shared the temples of Ledeii) was confused in mortal minds with the images of Ledeii, whose strict regimentation and desire for human sacifices did not merge well with a god of Love, so lovers sacrificed to the kinder Fianna, and ultimately to Mielsen; but the remnants of Mordrenn's cult lasted until the fall of the Almete Empire a mere 1400 years ago. Csthenkes, now confused and weary, had been deserted by most of his worshippers, who had turned to the other Gods to find some more positive leadership than "Do as you feel is right". He decided that nothing was worth the effort it took; nothing can be achieved without discipline, but the sole purpose of discipline is to gain freedom, which is the antithesis of discipline.... He became the deity of despair.

Ledeii's position as spiritual leader of the disciplined, uncaring humans was taken by Abex the sahuagin-god, although diverting his attention to do so allowed the last remnants of Onjua's sea-elves to entrench and hold out long enough to get the population back up to a viable level.

Valbure was possibly the least-affected of the Gods, coming through the Godswar without damage. As one of the Gods who beat Keisha, he fathered Fealans on Grea. Similarly, although more hurt by the fight against his brother, Tarmenel was not seriously damaged and fathered Mielsen on Trea.

Fianna's losses through the Godswar were mostly made up for by extra support she gained from mortal lovers after the War, and was able to support her husband's recovery through this extra strength.

Saith, leader of the Gods' forces (he had to prove himself — like Pharastus he had no area of responsibility, he was "just another warrior-god") found himself the deity responsible for Vengeance, his few remaining worshippers all good, powerful warriors and clerics. So he decreed that his followers should be as highly trained as possible, and the setting up of Schools of the Warrior Arts for all his worshippers ensured a good supply of paladins among his followers. His son by Hrea, Dayleeh, was inspired by his example and has followed in setting up rigorous regimes for his worshippers to follow.

Onjura, never banished but able to reach Shadowland because of her psychic links with Pharastus, now acts as her embittered husband's contact with the Gods and mortals, and on her travels to visit him she accompanies the souls of the Dead through the perils of the Planes Between. As such, she is worshipped by all those who have lost a loved one, despite her connections with the god of Death.

Knowledge of the non-humans and their deities has never been sure and their origins are obscure. Some scholars tell the following tale; the races of Gnomes, Orcs, and Giants, left without Gods watching over them for a time and starting from small, scattered populations, diverged widely. The Gnomes in the mountains became taller, stronger and more fierce, and developed into the race known as dwarves, those in the lowlands became smaller and more peaceful, becoming the halflings we know so well, and the Gnomes in the hills, in contact with both other races and living in the area they have always favoured anyway, stayed as they were to this day. Similarly, the Orcs diverged into the now-familiar humanoid races, goblins, ogres, and so on — but not kobolds, who are descended from some of Abex's sahuagin cut off from the ocean by the war. And the Giants developed into all the Giant races we know today. These new races developed new gods that stand alongside the old. Most of these cannot stand comparison with the real Gods, of course, with the exception, perhaps, of the dwarf-God Grunnundergron who was the Net-God before the Godswar and was chosen by the new dwarves of the mountains. Of course, the idea of the races being linked in this way is the purest obscenity to any member of the races concerned, so it's not advisable to repeat this theory in public!

The history of the Godswar allows us to understand many of the attitudes of the cults in the Domains. As an example, we will take the Lady Fianna, since she will be unfamiliar to many of you, who have spent your lives in the Country of Cerwyn. As we have seen, she is the daughter of Ledeii and Mordrenn, taking some of the attributes of each in her position as Goddess of Judgement, tempering a strict interpretation of the Law with the mitigating circumstances of Love. She takes after her father more than her mother, being generous and good. Indeed, until she trained Mielsen to take over the position she succeeded her father as Goddess of Love for a while. Her training of Mielsen to take over the role was her own idea: she felt that a God of Love should not have militarised followers, but as Goddess of Judgement she needed the power to back up her judgement. She also instilled in him an abhorrence of violence, to discourage his followers from becoming violent — she had seen the effect on Mordrenn of his followers going into battle and wanted to spare Mielsen that pain. The temples and priests of Mielsen rely on the warriors of the cults she has been able to persuade to support her: Saith's paladins, Tarmenel's warriors, and of course her own.

These are the deities with whom she is on the best terms, and her followers are under instruction to help their cults in any way they can without asking payment, the importance of solidarity between the Gods having been partially learned in the Godswar. The same injunction applies to Mielsen's cult, obviously, and her own son Rissinis' followers. On the contrary, followers of Abex or Pharastus or the humanoid-gods are fair game. By siding with the god-killers they have, she feels, judged themselves. But followers of Onjura, who nowadays are limited to a few sea-elves who don't worship the newer sea-elf gods, are able to ask her help, for they are the victims as much as anyone, since their only fault was that their ancestors followed their deity to her new home, even though that home was someone else's territory. This is the best example of the tempering of Law with Love she represents, as reflected in her Holy Symbol; a set of scales, with a Book of Law exactly balancing a heart.

This idea that Law is not absolute, incidentally, is the reason that the worship of Fianna has been suppressed in Cerwyn, but it isn't easy to enforce. After all, her priests can claim help from those of her husband Tarmenel and her other allies, and it is impossible to tell what is going on in private services in the Temples and, just to add insult, Tarmenel's Temple Without Doors which dominates the City League's skyline is topped by the Hand of Fianna above the Floor of Judgement.

Fianna

Chaotic Good Goddess of Judgement. Clerics may be male or female, human or half-elven, and must have a charisma of 12+. They may only reach 5th level if they have Cha 15+, in which case they gain one point of charisma at 5th level. Likewise, they must have Cha 18+ to reach 9th level, when they gain another point (this can put their charisma up to 20, or even 21 if a **tome of leadership & influence** has been used). The year's major ceremonies are on the Equinoxes. **Detect lie** is a third level spell (**undetectable lie** is still fourth).

The Gods and Their Followers

In Pelinore, where the Gods themselves need followers if they are to exist, the choices PCs make when they are considering which to follow matter a great deal. The clerics of each deity are expected to 'recruit' believers at every opportunity, and PC clerics should never miss an opportunity to show the local populace just how wonderful their deity is. There are three types of 'worship'. *Believers* merely accept that the God exists; typical believers in the god Fealans would make a small donation at a temple in return for the good fortune that brought them some little treasure. Naturally, it is possible for an individual to believe in any number of deities, and most ordinary NPCs will have their own pantheon of preferred Gods. *Followers* are more dedicated, and act in dedication to one, or occasionally a larger number, of deities. Regular visits to temples, donations and favours will occupy much time and money. A follower of Mielsen would give the finest treasure to the nearest temple, and would spend time thinking up poetry, or pursuing a quest for a coveted member of the opposite sex. Lastly, of course, there are *clerics*, who dedicate themselves professionally.

It is possible that characters will change preferred deities (Mielsen might only be followed when a new love appears), or that they will ignore them all, but remember — the deities of Pelinore act only in their own interests; clerics will receive no spells, followers can expect no heavenly intercession when things go wrong unless the deity has received proper worship — and is in the mood to help! It's no good calling on Valbure the first time your sword breaks unless you have proven yourself worthy.

Chris Felton

Deep in the heart of Pelinore has grown the City League, a mighty hive of humanity, offering everything an adventurer could desire. Each month **IMAGINE** *magazine presents a few buildings from within the City; describes their inhabitants; and offers one or two ideas for adventure. The City provides the ideal campaign base for the DM who can collect these articles and steadily build them up into the most comprehensive campaign setting available. Copy them, or cut them out and store them in a ring file — and you need never be short of an idea for a City encounter again.*

PELINORE: the City League

13 Carraway Keep and the White Order
by Graeme Drysdale

There was a time, millenia past, when the League was merely a single city. Even before that, in the days when the Clerk at Arms was becoming known as the Katar, that city was no more than a town. In such times was built Carraway Keep. Situated on the crest of the Hill, near where the walls of the Punctilio now stand, the Keep provided the town with a lookout across the lands and was able to warn the inhabitants of any forth-coming attacks. As the town began to expand, however, better fortifications and watchtowers were constructed to protect the prosperous young city from neighbouring provinces. As a result of this, the keep fell into disuse, and as the years passed, it slowly crumbled away and lapsed almost beyond repair.

It was at this time, just as the Keep was being scheduled for demolition, that a stranger rode into the city and immediately bought the keep for his own. Within a year, the stranger rebuilt it to its former glory and extended it to some three times its original size. Few people didn't wonder about the stranger, yet none asked of him his motives, for his guise suggested that he may be some banished lord or usurped king from far-off lands. However, soon news spread throughout the city of the true heritage of the Keeper of the Keep, and soon also did the purpose of the rebuilt tower. The stranger, who was known as Orrian, was a duke's son, and with wealth and skill aplenty, he proposed to establish the most powerful sorcerers' guild that had ever yet been beheld; and he planned to do this right in the City League, within the confines of Carraway Keep.

Orrian's scheme spread through the kingdoms like wildfire, and it was not long before young and old sorcerers alike beat a path to his door and asked to be admitted into his guild. Some were accepted but many were likewise turned away, for Orrian only desired to teach the best and most ambitious magicians. And so it was that the guild of Orrian, better known as the White Order, expanded and grew, even long after the old arch-mage had died. And still the guild grows, even today, some 14,000 years after its initial opening. It is said also that magic-users of the White Order are more proficient and of finer quality than any normal sorcerer, and such is this reckoning that those of the Order are now sought worldwide.

Historians are now wont to remark that it seems a strange coincidence that the White Order was founded at around the time that the Knights Ocular first became a force in the League. Wiser sages say that there could have been no League without the guidance of the Knights and that, anyway, for the Knights to be heard of implies that they had been in existance for many years before that. Whatever is the truth it is interesting at the very least that the Knights should have tolerated the development of so powerful an institution as the Order. Could there be some hidden connection, or is there genuine conflict?

Joining the Order

Player character magic-users may wish to join the White Order. Only characters who fulfil the desired requirements will be accepted. The GM should feel free to interpret these requirements as easily or a severely as seems necessary for the campaign. Since only the best and most ambitious are welcome, the GM can use the Order as a carrot to tempt the greedy MU, and to place such a character in a restrictive and demanding environment. Just what other party members might make of all this should make for some interesting gaming....

Requirements

Only those with the following attribute minima will be considered; Intelligence 16, Wisdom 15, Dexterity 15. Other considerations also apply according to the game system in use

Basic: The White Order will accept only magic users and elves with lawful alignments. Elves must also have a charisma of 15 or greater and must cease all activities as fighters the moment they join the order.

Advanced: The White Order will take human, elven or half-elven students. Illusionists will not be considered, and characters wishing to be split- or multi-class, will have their membership terminated. The Order will only take those of LG, LN, N or NG alignments. Chaotic or evil characters will not be considered and even true neutrals are viewed with great circumspection.

Characters' status within the Order is signified by the colour of their cloak and the type of staff carried. As a character rises in level, these insignia alter accordingly.

Level of Character	Colour of Cloak	Type of Staff	No extant
1-6	Light Blue	Oak, unshod	87
7-9	Dark Blue	Oak, steel shod	43
10-15	Brown	Beech, copper shod	10
16-20	Grey	Beech, silver shod	3
20+	White	Yew, gold shod	0

The No Extant column refers to the number of magic users currently in each group — it is not a maximum for that group. There is no limitation on Light Blue students but the DM must control promotions very carefully. Player characters reaching the exalted status of Greys ought to be very rare and Whites should exist in only the most exceptional circumstances.

Benefits and Restrictions for Members of the Order

1. Upon membership, the magic user character must pay an initial fee of (1000 x character's level)gp.
2. First level characters joining the Order may spend an extra year training and obtain one extra spell for their spell book (Advanced: 5 instead of 4; Basic: 3 instead of 2).
3. All characters may make use of the guild's facilities (laboratory, library, etc). Characters are also designated their own bed chamber within the keep which is theirs for as long as they are members.
4. Any training within the guild costs ½ that of the normal price. However, those merely using the guild as a cheap source of training will have their membership terminated.
5. If a rise in level results in the character achieving a higher status within the order, a ceremony will take place at which the magic-user is granted his new cloak and staff. Either, neither or both of the items may be magical, according to the level of the recipient and any outstanding feats performed on behalf of the Order. The allocation of appropriate magical items and the ceremony is left to the DM's discretion and inventiveness.
6. All magical cloaks or staffs discovered while adventuring must be given to the Guild. All xp gained for finding the item are kept, and the donating MU's reputation will increase within the Guild.
7. Anyone treating membership lightly, or abusing the basic principles it espouses, or being unfaithful to the order will be asked to leave — and will be lucky not to meet misfortune in her or his future career.
8. The White Order is a society which obeys the laws of the city. Those who willingly break some of the laws of the city will be instantly dismissed from the guild even if not proven guilty by the courts.

Members of the White Order at Carraway Keep

13a

Anarion the Grey; M; MU16; L/LG;
Staff and dagger +3; AC-3/-4; hp 45

H
S 15
I 18
W 16
D 17
C 15
Ch 13

☐ *Tall, middle aged man, grey hair and beard; grey* ***cloak of protection +3****, white shirt, grey trousers,* ***bracers of defence AC2*** *(in the shape of a golden torque); beech staff, silver shod, which is a +2 weapon and stores 3 spells (cf* ***ring of spell storing****): AD&D game: 1(16), 3(16), 6(5); D&D game: 1(6), 3(9), 6(3)*

☐ *Master of the White Order/Wizard*

☐ *Kind, knowledgeable and persevering, feared and respected by all but the most ignorant*

☐ *Rumoured to be the Son of Orrian(!), related to Sarron (**13b**), knows all students and staff at the Keep as well as most League dignitaries and (reputedly) the Katar himself*

Spells:
AD&D: 1-(2, 3*, 4, 6*, 16*, 20*, 22*, 24, 26, 29)
2-(2, 9*, 10*, 13, 17, 23*, 24)
3-(4*, 7, 9, 11, 16*, 17, 22*, 23)
4-(1, 4*, 7, 11, 16*, 23, 24*)
5-(7*, 8, 11, 16, 17*, 23)
6-(1, 5*, 8, 20, 23*)
7-(10, 12*, 15)
8-(6*, 10)

D&D: 1-(1*, 2*, 6*, 7*, 8, 9, 12)
2-(1, 5*, 6*, 8, 10, 11*, 12)
3-(2*, 3, 4, 5, 9*)
4-(1, 3*, 11, 12*)
5-(2*, 3, 6*, 8)
6-(1, 3*, 4, 5, 8*)
7-(7*, 11, 12)

13b

Sarron Silvertongue; F; MU10; L/LG;
Staff and dagger +1; AC2/3; hp26

H
S 10
I 18
W 16
D 15
C 12
Ch 17

☐ *Tall, good looking mature woman, streaked ash-blonde hair; red-brown* ***cloak of protection +4, ring of protection +2****, beech staff, copper shod, which is a +1 weapon*

☐ *Mistress of the White Order-Wizard/Necromancer*

☐ *Bears a strong resemblance to Anarion (**13a**), friendly, charitable but cautious and wary*

☐ *Descendant of Orrian, knows all at the Keep, and many important people in the League*

Spells:
AD&D: 1-(4*, 6, 9, 15, 16*, 20, 22, 27*, 30*)
2-(4*, 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15*, 22)
3-(3*, 4, 7*, 12, 16, 20, 24)
4-(2, 7, 13*, 18, 19, 21)
5-(4, 12, 14, 18, 20*, 22)

D&D: 1-(2, 3*, 5, 6*, 7, 8*, 9)
2-(2*, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9*)
3-(1*, 2, 3*, 6, 9, 11, 12)
4-(2, 6*, 8, 9, 10)
5-(4, 5, 6, 7*, 8)

13c

Firna; M; MU9; L/LN;
Staff; AC3; hp 16

H
S 7
I 18
W 15
D 15
C 11
Ch 9

☐ *Long dark blue robe, brown boots,* ***bracers of defence AC4*** *in the shape of a pair of silver armlets.*

☐ *Wizard/Sorcerer*

☐ *Intellectual, old, pleasant, kindly, knows a great deal about his trade.*

☐ *Knows all at the Keep and those from the Magic-Users' School (**9**); secretly very wealthy, with many contacts in the banking fraternity and the law, knows Fiorantannis (**50a**); several contacts among the worshippers of Saith*

Spells:
AD&D 1-(3, 4, 6, 13, 15*, 17, 22*, 30)
2-(7, 16*, 20*, 21*, 24*)
3-(4, 7, 10, 18*, 23)
4-(5, 6, 15*, 18, 21)
5-(18, 19)

D&D: 1-(2*, 5*, 8, 9*, 10)
2-(3, 9, 10*, 11*, 12*)
3-(2, 3, 8, 9*)
4-(2, 3, 5*, 8, 10)
5-(6, 7)

13d

Sharla; F; Fr8; L/LN;
No weapon; AC 6/7; hp 28

H
S 8
I 17
W 18
D 16
C 14
Ch 10

☐ *Long, flowing, light blue robes, soft brown boots,* ***ring of protection +1***

☐ *Sage*

☐ *Charming, intellectual, kind and helpful*

☐ *Knows the locals, those at the Magic-Users' School (**9**) and all of the order*

Spells:
AD&D: 1-(22*)
2-(6*)
3-(2*)
4-(22*)

D&D: none

13e

Amras the Blue; M; MU6; L/LN;
Dagger; AC 4/5; hp 20

H/E
S 15
I 16
W 15
D 16
C 10
Ch 11

☐ *Beautiful blue embroidered robe,* ***ring of spell turning*** *and* ***ring of protection +3***

☐ *Retired adventurer, assistant to Anarion and Sarron, Warlock/Magician*

☐ *Cheerful and frivolous, loves rings*

☐ *Knows many throughout the town and all within the Keep*

Spells:
AD&D: 1-(7, 9*, 15, 16, 22*, 25, 26)
2-(6, 9, 15, 21, 23*)
3-(16, 19, 22*)

D&D: 1-(4, 5, 6*, 9, 11*)
2-(4, 5, 9, 10, 11*)
3-(6, 9, 10*)

13f

Ash; M; F7; L/LG
Longsword +2, giant slayer; AC 0; hp 47/55

H
S 18[00]
I 13
W 13
D 16
C 15
Ch 15

☐ ***Chain mail shirt +3****, brown leather leggings, black leather boots, cloak of black with gold embroideries,* ***gauntlets of ogre power***

☐ *Bodyguard to Anarion – Champion*

☐ *Stern and grim, extremely loyal, will die for his master; always alert and at hand*

☐ *Friendly with his master and all in the Keep*

13g

Federe; M; F6; L/LG
Longsword and dagger; AC 5; hp 35/40

H
S 17
I 12
W 9
D 14
C 11
Ch 8

☐ *Chain Mail shirt, brown leather leggings, brown leather boots, crimson cloak with gold embroideries*

☐ *Bodyguard to Sarron – Myrmidon*

☐ *Thin and wirey, cheerful and mischievous but careful and always alert; fights with two weapons (longsword and dagger) due to high dexterity; will protect Sarron with his life*

☐ *Friendly with his mistress and master and all in the Keep, especially Amras; hates dwarves*

There are many other residents of the Order in the Keep and many who are travelling. The residents are made up of magic-users, assistants and general helpers as well as the odd visitor. The DM should design these characters as necessary bearing in mind that the NP `s listed are the most important and the restriction on numbers given above.

Scenario Ideas

1. The Night of Compulsion. When the White Order was established millenia ago, one legend has it that they came into conflict with the mysterious Knights Ocular. But what was the result? Both orders now exist, side-by-side, in the broil of the City, seemingly at peace. What is the secret?

2. The White Cloak. Orrian himself may have been the only true "White" in the history of the Order — certainly he is the centre of its mystery and power. When he was buried, it is said that his Cloak was buried with him. The order will do anything to protect the secret of its whereabouts, but just what is it and what are its powers? Characters of levels 8 and above, queue to the right!

3. Sharla. Although it is not readily apparent, Sharla is the odd-one-out at the Keep. Not a mage, but a Freewoman of some standing, but with spells available just the same (Advanced). Furthermore, she seems to know just about everything of the history of all the Domains, and recalls it just as if she'd been there herself....

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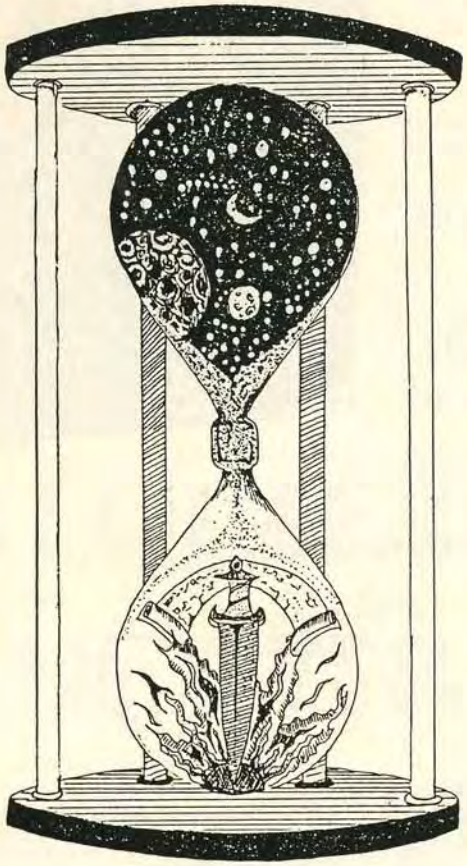

Peering through the coarse bracken we view the only bridge across the river. Alas, how do we deal with that encampment of fearsome creatures squatting and snarling their curses to unknown ears! A fight breaks out, giving our warriors an opportunity to charge forward! Too late, the creatures rally themselves for the ensuing awesome fight, but being overwhelmed they flee in confusion — the bridge is ours!
Time for something to eat.

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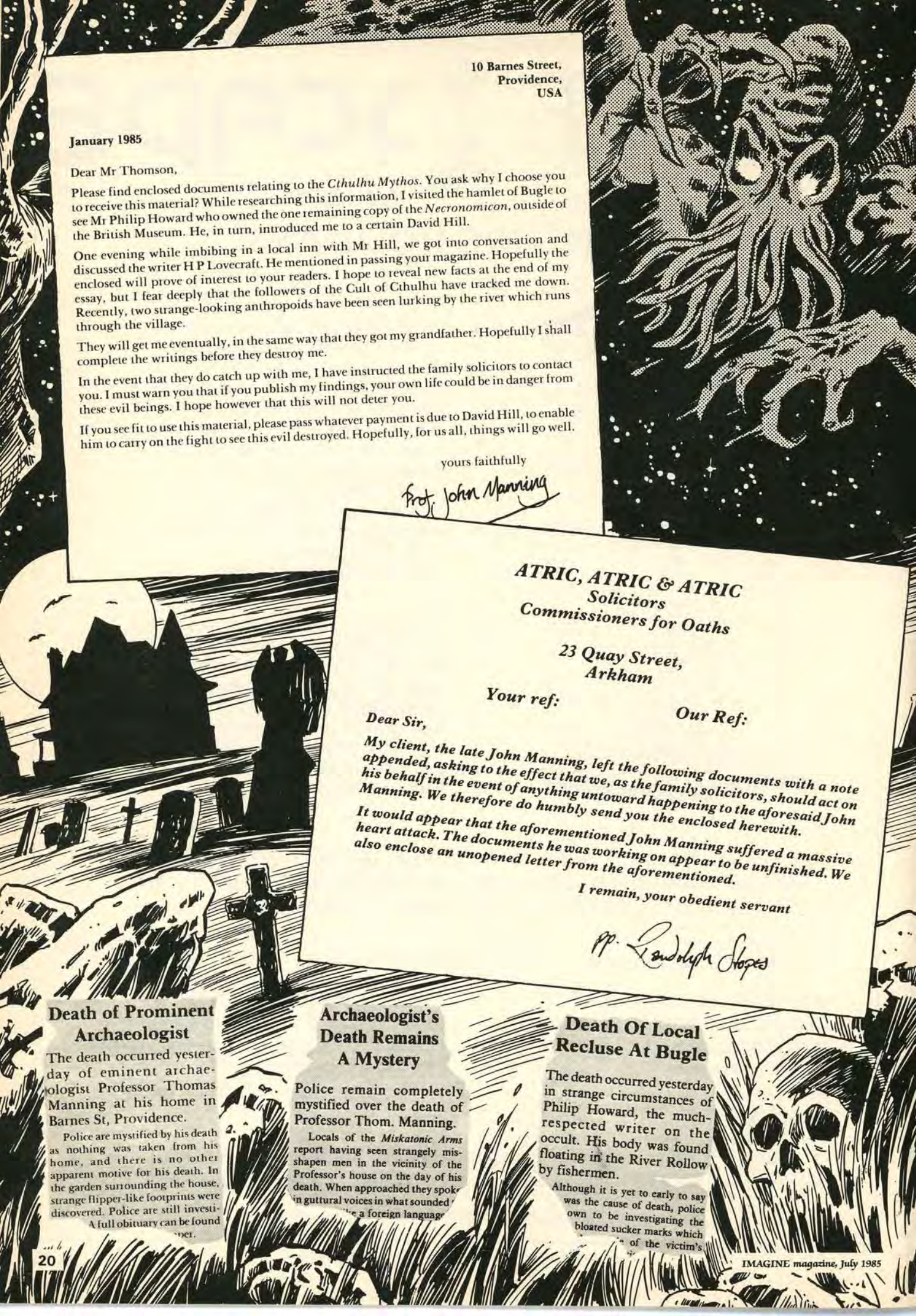

10 Barnes Street,
Providence,
USA

January 1985

Dear Mr Thomson,

Please find enclosed documents relating to the *Cthulhu Mythos*. You ask why I choose you to receive this material? While researching this information, I visited the hamlet of Bugle to see Mr Philip Howard who owned the one remaining copy of the *Necronomicon*, outside of the British Museum. He, in turn, introduced me to a certain David Hill.

One evening while imbibing in a local inn with Mr Hill, we got into conversation and discussed the writer H P Lovecraft. He mentioned in passing your magazine. Hopefully the enclosed will prove of interest to your readers. I hope to reveal new facts at the end of my essay, but I fear deeply that the followers of the Cult of Cthulhu have tracked me down. Recently, two strange-looking anthropoids have been seen lurking by the river which runs through the village.

They will get me eventually, in the same way that they got my grandfather. Hopefully I shall complete the writings before they destroy me.

In the event that they do catch up with me, I have instructed the family solicitors to contact you. I must warn you that if you publish my findings, your own life could be in danger from these evil beings. I hope however that this will not deter you.

If you see fit to use this material, please pass whatever payment is due to David Hill, to enable him to carry on the fight to see this evil destroyed. Hopefully, for us all, things will go well.

yours faithfully

Prof. John Manning

ATRIC, ATRIC & ATRIC
Solicitors
Commissioners for Oaths

23 Quay Street,
Arkham

Your ref: ***Our Ref:***

Dear Sir,

My client, the late John Manning, left the following documents with a note appended, asking to the effect that we, as the family solicitors, should act on his behalf in the event of anything untoward happening to the aforesaid John Manning. We therefore do humbly send you the enclosed herewith.

It would appear that the aforementioned John Manning suffered a massive heart attack. The documents he was working on appear to be unfinished. We also enclose an unopened letter from the aforementioned.

I remain, your obedient servant

pp. Randolph Stopes

Death of Prominent Archaeologist

The death occurred yesterday of eminent archaeologist Professor Thomas Manning at his home in Barnes St, Providence.

Police are mystified by his death as nothing was taken from his home, and there is no other apparent motive for his death. In the garden surrounding the house, strange flipper-like footprints were discovered. Police are still investi-

A full obituary can be found
...per.

Archaeologist's Death Remains A Mystery

Police remain completely mystified over the death of Professor Thom. Manning.

Locals of the *Miskatonic Arms* report having seen strangely mis-shapen men in the vicinity of the Professor's house on the day of his death. When approached they spok... in guttural voices in what sounded ... a foreign languag...

Death Of Local Recluse At Bugle

The death occurred yesterday in strange circumstances of Philip Howard, the much-respected writer on the occult. His body was found floating in the River Rollow by fishermen.

Although it is yet to early to say ... was the cause of death, police ... own to be investigating the ... bloated sucker marks which ... of the victim's

The Master and His Disciples

Revelations by John Manning which have just come to light and which add a new dimension to *The Cthulhu Mythos*

While going through the effects of my grandfather, the late and much respected archaeologist Professor Thomas Manning, I discovered a locked trunk in the attic of his Cornish residence.

On breaking open the metal box, I found it contained several bundles of documents. On examining them more closely, I found that they related to a strange quasi-religious cult which he termed the Cthulhu Mythos.

The documents revealed evidence which showed that the cult was prevalent in both America and England, with its origins in some of our ancient civilisations.

My grandfather, two months prior to his death — which the coroner pronounced due to 'cause or causes unknown' — had been the leader of an archaeological expedition in Tibet. The party came across what my grandfather's journals describe as:

> "....a private museum owned and run by a recluse named Robert Blake. The museum was set deep within the very bowels of the mountainside, and was housed in a large cave hewn into the shape of a large star. This strange geometric design housed a miscellaneous collection of artifacts including documents, books, journals, drawings and sculptures relating to the Cthulhu Mythos."

All of the exhibits in the museum had, according to my grandfather, been collected by Blake over a period of many years; in fact it had been a lifelong pursuit. As to why he had devoted his life to this task, and why he had chosen Tibet, the reasons are numerous; sufficient to say he believed the spot he had chosen was protected by the Elder Gods, and was the one site where the Ancient Ones could not gain entry.

The essay which follows is a collection of facts based upon copious notes made by my grandfather, plus notes I made myself after I too visited the Tibetan museum. At this point, I must make it abundantly clear that when I first read my grandfather's notes, I considered them to be the fictitious work of an over-active imagination. After my visit to the museum, I began to think along different lines. Blake informed me that many others had been to this place, to speak with him about the Mythos, including the writer H P Lovecraft. This meant that what the reading public had thought to be merely fictitious, were in fact veiled accounts based on the documents and artifacts in the museum! This path had been chosen since the writers could then preserve and protect the anonymity of persons who know of the evil of this cult. I in turn swore such an oath, and thus the reader must search for the truth within what follows....

A LOOK AT THE CTHULHU MYTHOS

When H P Lovecraft died in March 1937 he had written thirteen stories and novels which form a direct link with the Cthulhu Mythos. Today there are over 150, with fresh 'revelations' by new writers each year. The irony is that Lovecraft had not seen a single one of his stories published in book form. In this article, I hope to look at the Cthulhu Mythos and the way it has developed, and to show why it attracts readers and gamers.

> ***'That is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die.'***
> *The Necronomicon*

The above is a much-discussed couplet from the famous tome on the Black Arts, and refers to the Great God Cthulhu, who lies sleeping deep within the sea-city R'lyeh, and first surfaced in the 13,000 word novelette *The Call of Cthulhu*.

The mythos unfolds as follows. At the outset there were the Elder Gods. These were benign, and none except Nodens — Lord of the Great Abyss — were named. This pantheon of deities dwelt in the constellation of Orion, near Betelgeuze, occasionally leaving their sanctuary to intervene between the evil powers and the inhabitants of earth. These evil powers were the Great Old Ones or the Ancient Ones — a pantheon which consists of Azaroth, the blind idiot god; Yog Sothoth, who is not subject to the laws of time and space and is the guardian of the gate; Hastur the unspeakable god of the air and half-brother to Cthulhu; Shub Niggurath, the black goat of the woods and fertility god; and Nyarlathotep, the messenger of the Great Old Ones.

Lesser gods and beings were Hypnos, god of sleep; Father Dagon and Mother Hydra, rulers of the Deep Ones which are the minions of Cthulhu; the Abominable Snowmen of the Mi-Go; and the devil beasts the Shoggoths.

All these were worked into Lovecraft's fictional tales, which include *The Festival*, *The Dunwich Horror*, *The Shadow Out Of Time*, *The Haunter Of The Dark* and the first in the series, *The Nameless Ones*.

While writing his own accounts, H P Lovecraft also revised the works of other would-be authors, and in some instances the finished product was almost entirely HPL. Two such writers were Hazel Heald and Zelia Bishop. The latter is accredited with *The Curse of Yig*, *Medusa's Coil* and *The Mound* while Hazel Heald 'wrote' *Man of Stone*, *The Horror in the Museum* and *Out of the Eons*. In a letter to his friend Donald Wandrei, HPL stated that *The Curse of Yig* was written from Bishop's synoptic notes: 'all of the writing and most of the plot is mine.' The creation of the snake-god Yig is also his, and in another letter he refers to Mexican cultures and the feathered serpent Kukulcan of the Mayas. In 1930, HPL incorporated Yig into his own account *The Whisperer in the Darkness*.

At the same time as HPL was writing and revising the Mythos tales, friends became disciples of the master and added to the panoply of gods and beings; the most famous of these being R F Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch and Frank Belknap Long.

Of the four, Ashton Smith probably added the finest creations to the Mythos. By far and away the best of his tales are to be found in *Hyperborean Tales*. In this series, the reader is introduced to such demonic entities as Tsath-oggua — a dark demon-god, squat and fur-covered, with bat-like features and a sloth-like body, worshipped in remote aeons; Ubbo-Sathla 'a mass without head or members spawning the grey, formless efts of the prime and the grisly prototypes of terrene life' (*The Book of Eibon*); Aboth and Atlach-Natch. Information on these and other

gods and beings can be found in the eleven tales which make up the Hyperborean Cycle. Three of the finest are *The Tale of Satampra Zeiros*, *The Door to Saturn* and *Ubbo-Sathla*.

In his Averoigne series, which features medieval wizards and demons bearing the French translation, equivalents of the Mythos deities are invoked — Zhothaqqual, Yok Zothoth and Kthulhut.

R F Howard added to the mysteries of the Mythos with such stories as *The Children of the Night*, *The Thing on the Roof* and *The Blackstone*. Using information about the deities he also added one minor god to the pantheon, Gol-goroth.

Frank Belknap Long added three pieces to the Mythos, *The Space Eaters*, *The Hounds of Tindalos* and the *Horror From The Hills*. In these he introduces Caugnar-Faugn, the elephant-headed devil-god. In *Hounds*, ravenous beasts from beyond time and space are central to the action. It is interesting to note that Long was the first writer HPL allowed to use parts of the Mythos in his own writings.

The last writer from this era was a 15 year old who wrote to HPL in 1933, and over the next 18 years contributed on an irregular basis to the Mythos. His name was Robert Bloch. In only his second story, *The Secret in the Tomb*, he made the first such contribution. Throughout his stories, Bloch made many references to new deities and beings on the periphery of the Mythos, but he never enlarged on the fragments of lore.

Azaroth *Primal Chaos. Dwelling at the centre of Infinity. Formless. Mover in Darkness. Negative. Eater of Minds.*

Nor has the Mythos been expanded only in the USA. Three writers in Britain — Ramsay Campbell, Brian Lumley and Colin Wilson — have each added a new dimension to our knowledge of the legends of the Mythos.

Ramsay Campbell, a Liverpudlian, had his first collection published by Arkham House in 1964 when only 18. In this volume, a new deity — Glaaki — is introduced. This creature has a body ten feet in diameter, a thich-lipped mouth set in a spongy face from which protude three yellow eyes on thin stalks. The 'thing' exists in a metal body composed of living cells. Also in *The Inhabitants of the Lake and Other Less Welcome Tenants*, Daoloth, the Render of the Veils, is woven into the structure. This God enabled his priests and acolytes not only to view both the past and the future, but also to see how objects extend into the last dimension. Campbell's collection of short stories was the first set of Mythos material to appear by a new writer since 1937. In 1969, his short story *Cold Print* presented more material on Glaaki, and showed a cult following to be rife in England.

In the same year, the first stories by the young writer Brian Lumley were published. Shudde-M'elle and Yibb Tstll from *The Sister City* and *Cement Surroundings* were two more deities to join the pantheon. Lumley proved that he could provide interesting new information, and he more than fulfilled expectations with the revelations which came in the *Titus Crow* series of novels.

And in that same year, 1969, came Colin Wilson's information relating to the Mythos. His short story, or novelette, *The Return of the LLogior* was his second excursion into the realm of Cthulhu; his first — a full length novel, *The Mind Parasite* — having been published in 1967. Since then he has written two more novels revolving around the ancient lore. Wilson, one of Britain's most knowledgeable and finest writers on the occult, has given readers four literary treats and all are highly recommended.

Shub-Niggurath *Black Goat of the Woods. The Thousand Young. He of the Sabbat.*

Finally, we must return to America to find the most fervent of the disciples, August Derleth. In all probability, had it not been for Derleth's unashamed enthusiasm and verve, along with that of Donald Wanderei, Cthulhu would have been forgotten long ago. Together they set up a small publishing company which they named Arkham House. The original intention was to publish just three large volumes of HPL's work. Today, 46 years on from the first volume *The Outsider and Others*, Arkham House is still going strong.

Not only did Derleth contribute his own pastiches to the Mythos, but he also completed fragments and half-completed stories left after HPL's death. In all, he added 27 new Mythos tales. Of these, *The Trail of Cthulhu*, *The Gable Window* and *The Lurker at the Threshold* provide interesting new information. It was also the late August Derleth who coined the term, The Cthulhu Mythos.

Cthulhu *Lord of the Deep Ones. Sender of Dreams. He of the Water. The Sleeper. In Death awake.*

The subject of place names provides much food for thought, bearing in mind that fictitious names had to be invented to hide the identities of those involved. HPL invented a territory which he named Arkham county. This included Arkham, Kingsport and Dunwich, all of which parallel Massachusetts' townships, universities, museums, ports, sordid backstreets and blasted heathland.

Ramsay Campbell's tales are set in the Severn Valley and the Cotswolds, with such placenames as Goatswood, Severnford, Berkley, Brichester and Devil's Steps. Goatswood is named after Shub Niggurath, with the local belief that the deity is either imprisoned under a nearby hill, or has at times made his home there.

Besides Earthly places, there are also those which are far out in time and space. In *Celephais*, HPL first mentions the Plateau of Leng, and in *The Whisperer in Darkness* more information is given. Also in this story we learn of Yuggoth, a dark planet on the very edge of the solar system (this being HPL's version of Pluto, which was discovered in the same year).

Ramsay Campbell's alien landscape was a 'globe far beyond the reach of an earthly telescope, which orbited a double sun at the edge of the universe' (*The Insects of Shaggi*). He also added more to the geography of Yuggoth in his short story *The Mine of Yuggoth*.

Tsathoggua, the toad-like god, originated in N'kai. Lloigor and Zhar — the twin obscenities and two of the Great Old Ones — came from the Isle of Stars in the Lake of Dread, according to Chinese legends.

Finally, the Eldritch books, and those earthly magicians who have attempted to make contact with the unearthly beings. The most famous book is the dreaded *Necronomicon*, written by the mad Arab poet Abdul Alhazred. Originally entitled *Al Azif*, it was written in 730, and translated into Greek in 950. The Arab text disappeared soon after. In 1232, Pope Gregory IX suppressed both the Greek and Latin versions, but the book survived, to be translated into English by John Dee in 1571. Valuable work has been done in the 20th century by writers such as L Sprague de Camp, Robert Turner, David Langford and Colin Wilson.

Over the centuries, other books relating to the Dark Arts have been written, and several of the writers mentioned have drawn from them after visiting the Tibetan museum.

Ashton Smith referred to the tome *The Elder Book of Eibon* and frequently quoted from it — one story, *The Coming of the White Worm*, is a chapter taken directly from it. Not only did Smith refer to the original text, but he also quoted directly from a French translation — the *Livre d'Eibon* by Gaspard du Nord.

R F Howard had read and studied *Unausspechlichen Kulten* by the German scholar Von Juntz. Translated, this means *Nameless Cults*, and it was first published in Germany in 1839. A cheap English translation, *The Black Book*, surfaced in London in 1845. R F Howard was also a keen reader of poetry, and one of his favourite poets was Justin Geoffrey, who wrote several poems around the Mythos theme, including the epic *The People of the Monolith*. A slim volume of Geoffrey's work is soon to be published in this country by Innsmouth Publications.

Robert Bloch was the proud owner of a nasty little volume called *Mysteries of the Worm* by Ludvig Prinn. This book now exists under the title *De Vermis Mysteriis*. Derleth was a keen reader of *The Celeano Fragments* and *Cultes des Goules* by the Comte d'Erlette.

More recently, Campbell and Lumley have revealed their deep knowledge of three occult volumes, *Gharne Fragments*, *Cthaat Aquadingen* and the *Revelations of Glaaki*. These are not as rare as some of the aforementioned volumes, and might be obtained through specialist outlets.

Finally my own contribution. Over the last two years, information has come into my hands which leads me to believe that several prominent politicians are involved in calling up the Great Old Ones. The date for the summoning is very close and the following political figures are involved...

Dear Keith,

May 1985

Thank you for your last letter. I am afraid this reply will be rather rushed, and I cannot supply you with a return address at present, as I have had to leave my home suddenly.

I have read through the material you received from John Manning very carefully, and I would agree with you that something must be missing. What you have here is the first compilation of source material for the Cthulhu Mythos I have seen, along with an inference that certain fiction writers were in fact writing disguised factual accounts of the cult. The pen names are well known, I feel, and it might be possible for you to track down the likes of Brian Lumley and David Langford. I would urge you to be extremely circumspect; these writers have not hidden behind this fictional facade for no reason.

Whatever the great conclusion of John Manning's essay, I fear it is lost to us. Presumably, he had not completed his task at the time of his death.

You ask if there is any truth in Manning's assertions, and whether you should publish his work. I beg you to do so. Whatever befell Manning, his grandfather and other investigators such as Philip Howard, it is certainly evil. You must publish what you have, and allow your readers to decide if there is any truth in the Cthulhu Mythos. I am at present editing the documents written by the Prof. and they will be published in the autumn by Pentagram Press under the title *The Journals and Revelations of Prof Manning.*

David Hall

PS I'm going to try to get to Tibet myself. I will write again if I get there.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

***NOTE:** The list below is incomplete. John Manning was in the midst of completing it but unfortunately he met his death before the task was completed.*

Many of the books below are either out of print or are only available from import shops. Out of print books may occasionally be found in secondhand and antiquarian bookshops found in seedy backstreets or on quaysides.

The Letters of H P Lovecraft. Four Volumes Limited Edition Arkham House

Lovecraft — A Biography - L Sprague de Camp, NEL (OUP)

Dagon - H P Lovecraft, Panther reprinting April

At the Mountains of Madness, Panther reprinting February

The Haunter of the Dark, Panther reprinting June

The Tomb, Panther (OUP)

The Lurking Fear, Panther (OUP)

The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, Panther (OUP)

The Lurker at the Threshold, Panther (OUP)

The Shuttered Room, Panther (OUP)

Out of Space and Time Two volumes - Clark Ashton Smith, Panther (OUP)

Lost Worlds - Clark Ashton Smith, Panther (OUP)

Other Dimensions - Clark Ashton Smith, Panther (OUP)

Genius Loci - Clark Ashton Smith, Panther (OUP)

The Abominations of Yondo, Panther (OUP)

Tales of Science and Sorcery, Panther (OUP)

Hyperborea - Clark Ashton Smith, Ballantine (OUP)

Xiccarph - Clark Ashton Smith, Ballantine (OUP)

Zothique - Clark Ashton Smith, Ballantine (OUP)

Poseidonis - Clark Ashton Smith, Ballantine (OUP)

The Opener of the Way - Robert Bloch, Panther (OUP)

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The Mind Parasites - Colin Wilson, Panther

The Philosophers Stone - Colin Wilson, Panther

The Horror From the Hills - F Belknap Long, Brown Watson (OUP)

Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos - ed August Derleth, Arkham House (OUP)

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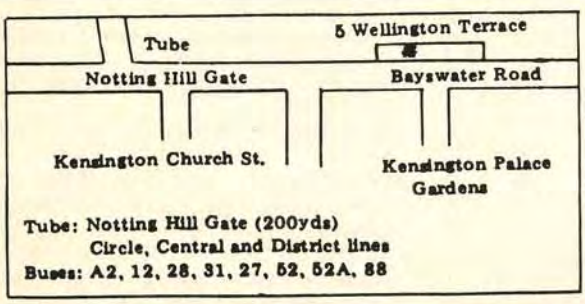

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A NICE NIGHT FOR SCREAMING

by Marcus Rowland

This adventure is designed to be played with any Twenties- or Thirties-based role-playing game, principally the **Call of Cthulhu**, **Daredevils** or **GANGBUSTERS**™ games. Statistics for the specific systems are given in a separate appendix at the end of the module; the text of the module is as 'systemless' as is practical. The various statistics follow applicable conventions in formatting. An appendix is also provided so that the scenario can be used with the **ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES**™ role-playing game.

The scenario is designed for 3-6 moderately experienced player characters, based anywhere in continental North America except the south-eastern United States (Florida and adjoining States). The action of the module takes place during May 1926.

STOP! Read no further if you intend playing a character in this scenario. The remaining information is for referees only.

INTRODUCTION

This scenario 'accidentally' involves the adventurers with a cunning murderer, who is attempting to disguise his activities behind a supernatural veneer. The referee must should maintain a tense atmosphere of fear and suspicion, giving the impression that the adventurers may be scratching the surface of some age-old evil.

The player characters have three main objectives: first, survival; second, keep Agnes Barnes alive and get her to Miami in time to save Lucarotti; third, solve the mystery at the Pellew house. The importance of keeping her alive during this adventure cannot be over-emphasised, as her presence is the sole reason for the characters' involvement. She should not agree to any serious illegality, and should be the 'conscience' of the party as well as a potential victim who must be protected at all times.

Ideally, this adventure should be inserted into the campaign at a convenient point. As the major Non-Player Character involved in the adventure, Agnes Barnes should be a useful acquaintance of the player characters before the adventure starts: a researcher, ex-secretary or stenographer with whom they have had some dealings in the past. Thus it will be best if the GM introduce her to the players some time in advance of the playing of this module.

Agnes has a problem. Shortly before she came to work in the town where the adventurers are based, she was working in Miami, a secretary for Frank Lucarotti, now known as the Fort Lauderdale Axe Murderer. Agnes believed Lucarotti was an ordinary businessman when she went to work for him, and resigned when she found he was a bootlegger. She left Miami, and wasn't surprised to hear that he had been arrested a few weeks later.

Two days ago a weekly news magazine carried a feature article about Lucarotti and the Fort Lauderdale murders. Agnes realised that it could not have happened in the manner that the article described. The murders took place at the time she was handing her notice to Lucarotti. For some reason she was never called as a witness, and Lucarotti has been sentenced to be executed in Miami in six days time. When Agnes realised this she went to the local police, but they refused to listen to her story. She sent telegrams to the Miami and Fort Lauderdale Police Departments, but there were no replies. She suspects — quite rightly —that someone has bought the police officials involved in the case.

When she returned to her apartment on the following evening she was attacked by an intruder who had jimmied the lock. He tried to stab her, but she broke free and escaped. She is sure she is being followed. With no other choice open, she has gone to the adventurers for help.

As Agnes explains, the referee should make it clear that she is very tense, and that as she gazes out of the window she sees a black limousine parked across the street. Two men are leaning on it, watching....

Agnes feels that the mystery must be solved in Miami, and asks for help in evading whoever is following her. It should be made obvious that the hoodlums are making serious attempts to kill her.

Preliminary Events

Once Agnes has contacted the adventurers further attempts will be made on her life. The referee should vary the methods to suit the campaign circumstances, but these might include an assault on the adventurers and Agnes, an attempted hit and run 'car accident', a car bomb or tommy gun attack. These attacks must not actually kill or seriously wound Agnes. Innocent bystanders might be killed, increasing the adventurers' feelings of being targets-by-association. Thugs (with suspicious bulges under their left arms) are waiting at ports, railroad stations and bus depots, watching all departures.

A NICE NIGHT FOR SCREAMING

Should the adventurers own an aircraft, they should be encouraged to use it. If they do not, Agnes will remember that there is an air charter service based at a small airfield outside the city. The process of evading any watchers and getting to the airfield provides a good excuse to run a car chase or a gun battle.

Once at the airfield, an aircraft (an ex-army transport) and pilot are available, though chartering it to fly to Miami (with or without a pilot) costs $400. As the adventurers and Agnes board the aeroplane (or after refuelling, if the journey to Miami is longer than 500 miles) two cars will drive onto the airfield where the aeroplane is parked. As the aeroplane trundles down the runway and takes off a few bullet holes will appear in the wings, but no obvious damage will be done....

An hour out from Miami the plane will run into a violent storm. An NPC pilot will try to climb above the clouds, a player character pilot may attempt any other evasive action. The storm will blow the plane off course, and the pilot will be unable to recognise any landmarks.

Shortly after, the fuel gauges will be reading close to 'empty' and the pilot will have to switch to the reserve fuel tank. Unfortunately, the pipe to this tank has been clipped by a bullet, and as soon as the reserve fuel valve is opened the pressure change will cause the pipe to rupture. The fuel in the reserve tank will spray out and be lost.

The pilot may attempt a descent through the storm for a soft landing at this point, the engines coughing as the last drops of fuel are used. The referee should allow the use of any relevant piloting skills or abilities. However, no matter how good the pilot, any dice roll called for by the rules will result in the plane crash-landing into a swamp. Any and all NPCs (except Agnes) are killed in this crash, and the survivors are knocked unconscious by the impact.

Although the plane is fated to crash, successful piloting skill rolls should still be noted for possible skill increases.

IN THE SWAMP

When the adventurers recover consciousness it is about 1am. Everyone is bruised and sore, but nobody is seriously injured. The aeroplane is sinking into the swamp as muddy water fills the fuselage through broken portholes and tears in the aeroplane's skin. Outside it is a pitch black night and heavy rain is falling.

The adventurers' luggage has been thrown forward and burst open, lying in a jumbled heap with the contents sodden and half submerged. Any radio equipment (the aeroplane did not carry a set) is wrecked beyond repair, the valves have been smashed. The aeroplane carries an inflatable life raft and footpump, both of which are undamaged, and the adventurers can inflate it before the aircraft finally sinks. Personal effects may be gathered, but only up to 4 items per person from the confusion of the fuselage's interior wreckage. Unless the adventurers immediately think of cleaning and drying them once they are out of the aeroplane, such firearms as they have salvaged will be corroded and jammed beyond use after 1d6 hours.

The plane will sink in 6+1d6 minutes, lurching violently a minute before it finally sinks beneath the surface. In addition to the adventurers and any of their equipment, the raft holds the following supplies:

Flare pistol and six flares (see specific game statistics)
First Aid kit
Compass
Half-gallon drum of drinking water, and some ship's biscuits
4 paddles, a sail, and a shelter canopy
Puncture outfit and air pump.

The flares are visible for 2 miles on a clear night, and give daylight illumination in a 50yd radius for 2d10 seconds. Firing flares during the storm will not attract anybody's attention; nobody is looking for the adventurers and the flashes will be lost amid the lightning.

Once safely in the life raft the adventurers will probably start to make plans and attempt to determine their location. There is nothing they can do except wait for morning, and hope that they will eventually reach firm ground. During the night the referee should roll for one encounter per hour until dawn (at about 4.45am), using the following table:

01-08	no encounter
09-10	1-4 (harmless) swimming snakes
11-12	strange noises in the distance (actually toads)
13-16	1-4 bullfrogs (harmless, edible at a pinch)
17-18	1 indeterminately large, mysterious swimming animal, which dives underwater as it approaches the raft
19	loud squelching noise and smell of rotten eggs — a pocket of marsh gas has been disturbed by the life raft
20	1 alligator (see specific game statistics)

All encounters except the alligator are harmless, and the alligator will not attack unless it is disturbed.

The storm ends around two hours after dawn. As the sky clears (at about 7am) the adventurers will see the bleak surface of a treacherous swamp, interrupted by occasional stunted trees and plants. Roughly a mile to the northwest is a hummock of higher ground, covered by a thick growth of trees. A wisp of smoke rises above the trees.

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR PELLEW

(Map 1)

It will take the adventures 30 minutes to reach the nearest point of the island, assuming all four paddles are used. The only practical and obvious landing site is at the point marked X on Map 1.

There are some signs of man on the island: cut tree stumps, a pile of logs, and empty beer bottles. A muddy path leads into the trees in a north-easterly direction. If the adventurers do not use this path they will run into boggy ground, poison ivy (which should not be recognised without appropriate botanical knowledge) and impenetrably tangled bushes.

At point (i) anyone making a successful Observation roll (CoC — Spot Hidden; DD — Hidden Thing) will notice a crude wooden grave marker to the left of the path, almost covered in (poison) ivy. If the ivy is removed a carved inscription can be read:

Anyone digging on this site will find the skeleton of a small dog buried in an old sack. A careful examination will reveal that it has two crushed neck vertebrae, and was apparently strangled, rather than drowned.

At point (ii) there is a small clearing with a child's swing, a wooden climbing frame and a slide. All these show signs of neglect, termite damage; rot and weeds festoon the lower rungs of the slide's ladder.

At point (iii) the path forks. Both ways are clearer than the path the adventurers have followed up to now, as though these are in more regular use. A successful Observation roll will reveal that footprints go in both directions, with those going right occasionally covering those going left. The paths have clearly been used since the storm ended.

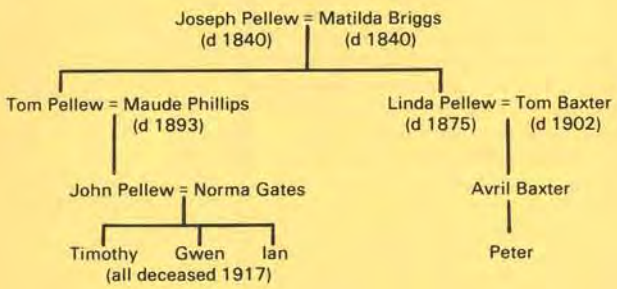
The left path leads to a smelly garbage heap, buzzing with flies. The right path continues for approximately sixty yards, ending in a clearing with an imposing old house, a shed (containing a small steam-powered generator) and a small jetty. A small steam launch is moored to the jetty.

There is an old man sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of the house, reading a book. As the adventurers leave the trees he will close the book, pick up a shotgun (previously concealed by a wooden pillar) and demand an explanation of the adventurer's presence.

The Pellew Family

The family living in the house are John and Norma Pellew, John's father Tom (the old man on the porch), and Avril Baxter (John's cousin). John Pellew is a noted biologist, and any of the adventurers will have heard his name in connection with the science (the referee should tell any biologist player characters that they have come across the name in learned journals), but no specific details of his work.

Although none of the family know it, Avril Baxter's illegitimate son Peter is also in the house, under the assumed identity of Alex Phillips, the handyman. The family tree following may clarify these relationships:



In 1890 sixteen-year-old Avril Baxter was seduced by a sailor. When it became clear that she was pregnant he deserted her. The subsequent child (Peter) was sent to an orphanage, and all record of him disappears after this. Peter set the orphanage on fire after stealing his own documentation and effectively disappeared. He had been told that John and Norma Pellew's children had died in a fire in 1917, and had discovered that if Tom, John and Norma died without heir, Avril inherits the income from a trust fund worth approximately $250,000. And, of course, once his true identity is revealed, Peter is the heir to Avril Baxter and any fortune she might have inherited....

In 1922 Peter Baxter murdered the Pellews' handyman in a logging 'accident' and applied for the job. After growing a moustache and adopting a stooped and slow demeanour he now uses the name 'Alex Phillips'. 'Alex' learned that Norma Pellew was a spiritualist, intent on contacting her dead children. He also discovered that the house was once a way station in the Abolitionist 'underground railroad' before the Civil War; with several secret passages and rooms, which the Pellews and the other servants knew nothing about.

In 1924 'Alex' began to cause fake psychic phenomena in the house, making Norma think she had made contact with the 'other side'. Norma now holds seances every night at 9pm. The male Pellews regard the seances as superstitious nonsense; John goes to his laboratory and Tom to his bed rather than take part.

Peter's plan is relatively simple. Norma always visits the old nursery after one of her seances, before sleeping. Peter intends to attack her there, strangle her, hang her body from one of the ceiling beams in the nursery where her children died and escape through the secret passages. The door will be bolted from the inside to produce a classic 'locked room' situation and an apparent suicide. He has even forged a suicide note for Norma.

The presence of the adventurers will not stop this plan. In fact, Peter would prefer there to be as many confused witnesses as possible. Once Norma is dead he intends to wait six months, then eliminate John and fake his own disappearance in a 'boating accident'. He is quite content for time to kill Tom Pellew, and after the old man is dead he will reappear as Avril's long lost son. Eventually Avril will have to die as well, but only after Peter is sure that he is the only heir.

Peter has already killed several people and will not hesitate to murder anyone who gets in his way. He also killed Spot the dog, who was showing far too much interest in the secret passages. If it seems likely that he will be caught, he will simply try to kill all the Pellews and escape. He may attempt to commit additional murders to add to the confusion.

There are three other employees in the house: Alice Sugden, the cook, Sylvester Potter, the butler and Barbara Norris, John Pellew's secretary.

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

The Pellew house is a two storey brick building with a slate roof, modernised in 1915 by the installation of running water and electricity. The family use a steam launch to travel to the nearest town, August, some 28 miles upstream. Last night's storm blew the boat against the jetty, bending the propellor shaft. It is not repairable with the tools on the island, and the boat is too heavy to be rowed or sailed upstream. A trader, Levi Custer, from August visits twice a week in his own boat, and is due to arrive around noon the day after the adventurers turn up.

The referee should give players decriptions of rooms, but should be vague about sizes. Unless the characters measure the rooms carefully (which is hardly the sort of act casual guests indulge in), the existence of the secret passages described below will not be apparent. All the rooms have wood panelling on the walls.

Ground Floor

The porch is sheltered by an extension of the roof, supported by six wooden pillars. All the lower floor windows, except those of the lobby, are barred, and all windows have external insect screens.

1. Lobby

The house is entered through a small lobby equipped as a conservatory. The plants are all rare swamp specimens of particular interest to naturalists and botanists. There are two cupboards holding wet weather clothing and fishing equipment.

2. Hall

The central hall is two storeys high, panelled in dark oak with a tiled floor. The upper gallery is carpeted. The hall is illuminated by a skylight, windows above the stairs at the east end and an electric chandelier. The overall effect is gloomy but impressive. There are two doors under the stairs. One is a broom cupboard, while the other leads down to the cellar. Over the south western corner is a trapdoor to the attic.

There are two well-concealed secret doors in the lower hall. Neither can be found unless the adventurers are actively searching in the right area and make a successful Observation roll. The northern secret door has claw marks (from Spot), and is obstructed by chairs. The southern secret door is well concealed; Peter has repaired it and restained the areas that Spot scratched, and it matches the rest of the panelling precisely. The third secret door in the hall (on the upper gallery) is equally well hidden. All the secret doors in this room are opened by depressing two false knots simultaneously, releasing a catch.

3. Dining room

Deserted except at meal times and during the evening seances, the dining room is furnished with a large table which will seat ten, a sideboard, with serving dishes and utensils, an upright pianola (mechanical piano) and a cylinder phonograph. Items which Norma and Avril use during seances (lettered cards, a toy trumpet, a Bible, a tambourine, candles and incense sticks) are stored in the sideboard.

The secret door in the east wall is equipped with a peephole, which is normally plugged by a fake knot of wood when not in use.

The pianola can be played like a normal piano, or wound up and set to play from specially punched paper rolls of music; at present it has a Brahms' Lullaby roll in place. Peter has rigged the pianola to play during seances. A thin wire runs under the secret door and when it is pulled the pianola starts playing, apparently of its own accord. Peter then reels the wire in, leaving no trace. The wire will only be found by someone making a successful Observation roll while actively searching.

The other mechanisms Peter can use during seances are detailed in the description of the secret passage (5) below. The referee should also see the notes on seances.

4. Lounge
This room contains a pool table, a bar holding several bottles of legal 0.5% beer and hidden bottles of bootleg wine and whisky, two comfortable armchairs and a card table. The west wall is covered by several tall cupboards, which make accurate measurement of the room extremely difficult.

Two of the cupboards are empty. One holds pool cues, balls and cards, a second contains old magazines and newspapers (dating back six years, and thus including a report of the death of the previous handyman), and a number of books and magazines dealing with psychic research and supernatural phenomena. The third cupboard holds a sewing basket, knitting a tapestry frame and part of a quilt, while the last is a locked gun cabinet (John, Tom, and Sylvester Potter have keys) containing two well-oiled 12-gauge shotguns, a .22 Remington rifle and several boxes of the relevant types of ammunition.

5. Secret Passage
This is part of the original Abolitionist modifications to the house, and is narrow (2 or 2 ½ feet wide at most) with a low ceiling (4 or 5 feet high). Bricks and sharp stones protrude from the walls, making movement difficult and slow (characters must move at half speed). Peter is familiar with these passages and can move at normal speeds. The passage ends in a vertical shaft and ladder to the cellar, the upper floor and the attic.

A box on the floor holds the equipment that Peter uses during seances — a toy trumpet, a tambourine, chimes and the 'mama' mechanism from a doll. Peter has removed bricks at two points to expose the wooden panelling, which readily transmits sound into the dining room.

6. Study
This is an office and library used by John Pellew and Barbara Norris, his secretary. John's desk holds nothing but records of his work, while the second desk has an Imperial typewriter and is covered in typed and collated reports. The bookcases around the walls contains files, records and books (in several languages) related to John's work, but only characters with biology or medical skill will be able to understand any of the titles. The secret door to this room is concealed behind one of these bookcases, but the hinges on the door are badly rusted, making moving the bookcase extremely difficult. A small wall safe behind an indifferent Hopper print holds $745 and some bonds. John has the only key.

7. Kitchen
The kitchen is the province of Alice Sugden and Sylvester Potter, who are joined at mealtimes by 'Alex' (Barbara Norris eats with the family).

The room has modern equipment (1920s), including a steel sink, a new wood-burning stove, a heated wash tub, a mangle and a recently installed electric refrigerator! There are also a rubbish bin, a butcher's table, three storage cupboards full of utensils, a table and a dresser with china. The outside kitchen door is locked at night, but open during the day.

8. Pantry
A straightforward food store, full of hanging joints of meat, sacks of flour, potatoes, coffee, beans and canned and bottled produce. Strips of fly-paper control the insect population.

Upper Floor

9. Laboratory
The main site of John Pellew's work, this room contains tanks of (harmless) reptiles and amphibians, a powerful Zeiss microscope and a huge central tank holding a baby alligator. This baby can bite for 1-3 points of damage (all rule systems). Cupboards and drawers under the workbench holds chemicals, a large plate camera, dissecting instruments and other biology equipment. The equipment is adequate for routine forensic and chemical work.

10. Store Room
This is basically a continuation of the laboratory, holding preserved and dissected specimens, chemicals, spare equipment, books and junk. The secret door is covered by a bookcase which moves easily if a concealed catch is depressed. The north end of the room is a photographic darkroom, equipped with an enlarger, sink, and developing dishes. If using the Call of Cthulhu rules, the referee should note that the chemicals in these rooms can be used to treat photographic plates to reveal invisible objects, as described in the Cthulhu Companion. Since no invisible objects are present this is a futile exercise.

11. Secret Passage
This passage is physically almost identical to the one on the floor below (5). A box on the floor holds a noose made from an old clothes-line, a strangling cord, a pair of leather gloves and a forged suicide note which reads:

Dear John,
I can no longer bear the separation from our children, when I know that they are waiting for us on the Other Side.

Please forgive me for deserting you.

Pray God will have mercy on my soul and permit me to enter His Immortal Kingdom.

Your Loving Wife

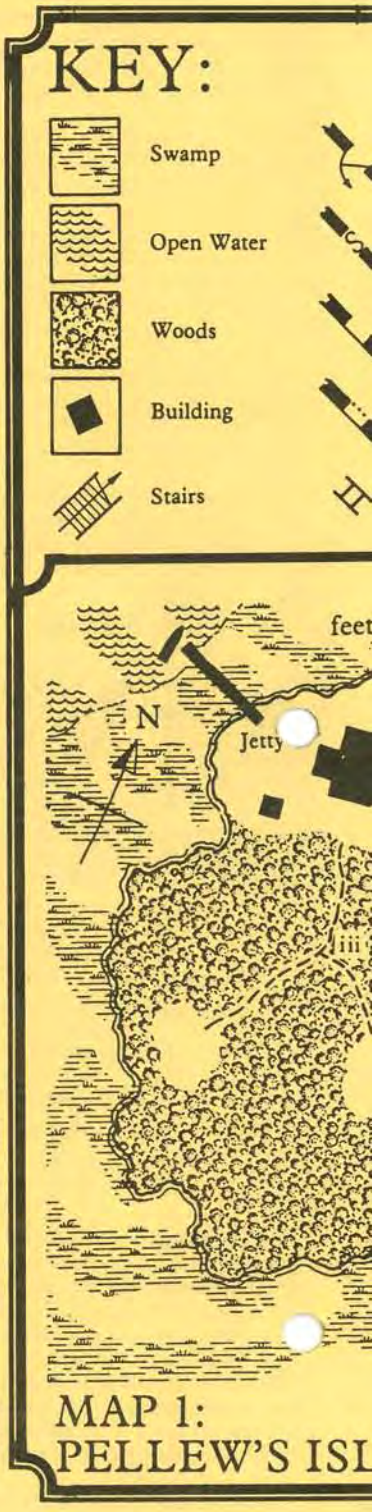
Norma

The note is a good forgery, and characters will need to compare it with a genuine sample of Norma's writing and make a detailed analysis to prove that it is a forgery. A Graphology roll (CoC — Spot Hidden and Read English or Forensic rolls; DD — Forensic Science) are required.

12-13. Nursery and Bedroom
The outer of the two rooms originally occupied by the three Pellew children is the nusery, the scene of their deaths. Norma insisted on restoring this room to its original condition. Many toys and books are present, including a rocking horse, dolls' house, wooden railway set, and a huge teddy bear. Peter often moves these toys around the room, and sometimes sets the rocking horse in motion during seances. Norma has the only key to these rooms and therefore thinks that they are haunted by her children.

The ceiling is beamed, with sufficient room for Peter to fix his rope to one of the rafters when the time comes for Norma's 'suicide'.

The bedroom has three children's beds. Peter occasionally crumples the bedding, to give the impression that children have been sleeping in them.



MAP 1: PELLEW'S ISL

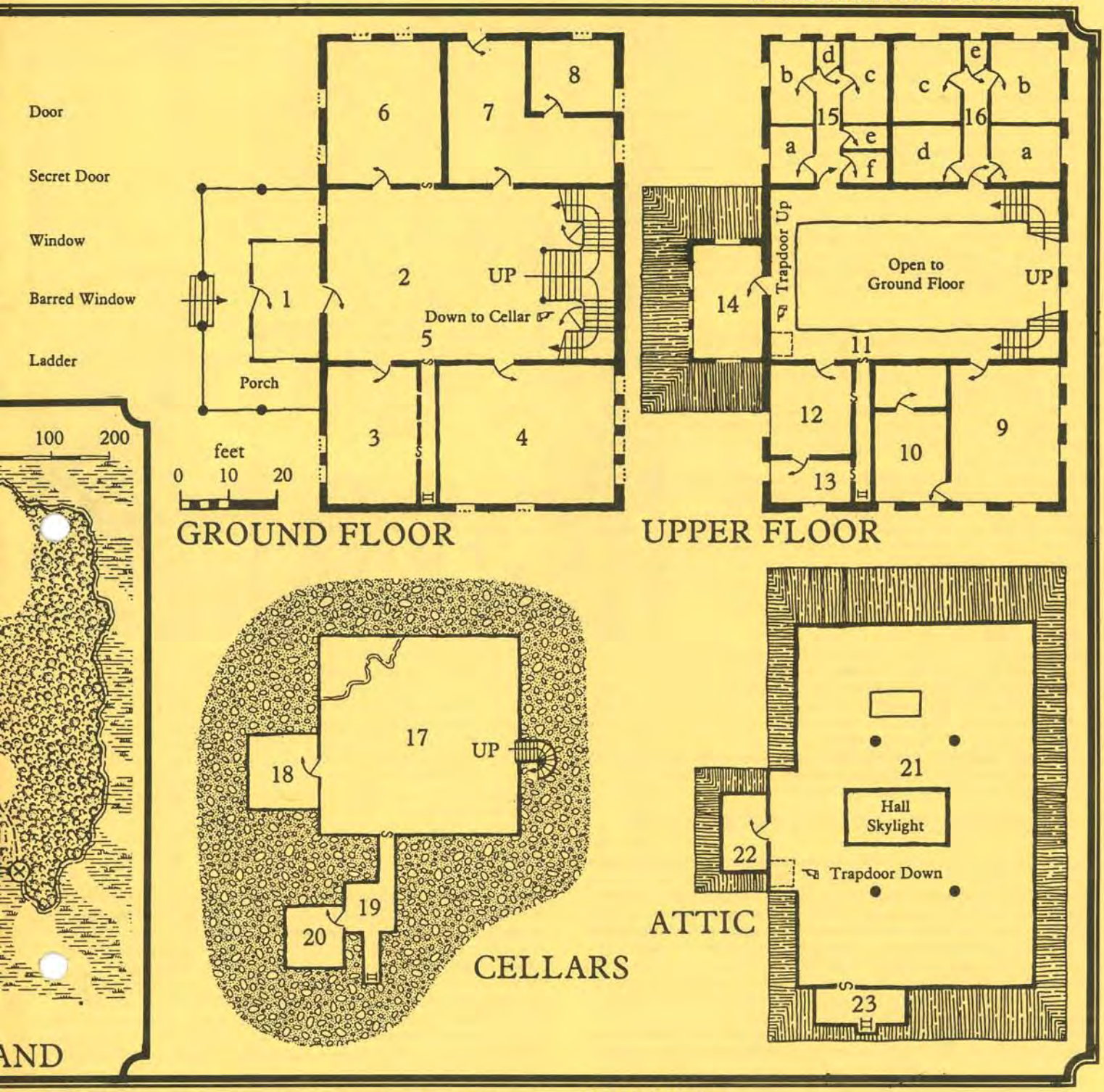
14. Spare Room
This room is currently unoccupied. Agnes and any other female characters will be allocated this room at night. Male adventurers will be expected to bed down in the lounge or dining room.

15. Servants' Quarters
These rooms are occupied by the family employees. All the rooms have plastered walls and are comfortably furnished.

15a is occupied by the butler, Sylvester Potter. A bottle of brandy is stored under the bed.

15b is the room used by 'Alex Phillips' (Peter Baxter). The other bed in here is unused. There is nothing obviously incriminating in this room, but there are a number of books, some which might seem too advanced for 'Alex's' level of intelligence.

Alice Sugden and Barbara Norris sleep in **15c**. Hidden at the back of Barbara's bedside cabinet is a diary. In it she confesses to loving John Pellew. Peter has read this document and may attempt to use Barbara's love for John to frame her with Norma's murder if an investigation seems to be coming close to the truth.



15d is a lavatory. John has concealed a .45 revolver in an oilskin pouch in the cistern, and will shoot his way out if he sees no other way of escaping. The gun is clean of fingerprints, but there are some partial prints on the bullets. **15e** is the linen closet, while **15f** is a bathroom.

16. Family Bedrooms

These three bedrooms are used by the Pellew family.

16a is used by John and Norma. Boxes on the wardrobe contain children's clothes, a wedding dress and many family photographs.

16b belongs to Avril Baxter. The wardrobe has a false back, which hides a huge collection of pulp romance novels.

16c is Tom Pellew's room. The walls are lined with pictures of him with Hill, Sherman, 'Teddy' Roosevelt and other notables. A showcase holds Confederate medals from the Civil War and US Army decorations from the Spanish-American War of 1898.

16d is a bathroom and **16e** the lavatory.

Cellars

The cellars are built of stone blocks.

17. Main Cellar

This room holds old furniture and junk, a workbench and tools, a well and an electric pump supplying a water tank in the attic, a wood pile and a heap of planks and timber half hiding the (normally locked) door to the Wine Cellar (18). A leak has allowed water into the cellar and it is flooded to a depth of two inches in the north eastern corner.

The secret door in the south wall is a stone slab on a steel pivot.

18. Wine Cellar

This room holds a cask of legal 0.5% beer and 5 cases of bootleg whisky.

19. Secret Room

This is Peter's base of operations. An old roll-top desk holds skeleton keys, a torch, writing paper, a variety of pens and inks, cotton gloves and samples of the family members' handwriting. There are also several crumpled early drafts of Norma's 'suicide note'. A barrel holds the coil of rope from which the noose was cut. A long wooden box holds a selection of tools. A crate supports an oil lantern, a can of paraffin, a pair of thick socks (used to muffle footsteps) and a box of matches. The south passage from this room leads to a vertical shaft and ladder.

20. Tomb
This room holds rough three wooden coffins containing the skeletal remains of three escaped slaves who died in the house during the 'underground railroad' days.

Peter has bored a hole through the floor of the dining room (3) above and can use a long pole to shake the table during Norma's seances.

Attic
The attic is stiflingly hot by day and cold at night. The ceiling is 12 feet high at the roof peak, falling to a 4 foot high wall around the perimeter of the main attic. The floor is made of wooden boards supported on rafters.

21. Main Attic
This is a large gloomy compartment with no illumination except that from a naked light bulb above the entry trap door. A closed brick shaft linking the hall to the skylight and a water tank dominate the room. Lighting cables for the upper storey pass through holes in the floor, and Peter has enlarged these to spy on the rooms below. He uses a feather duster to hide any marks in the dust.

The secret panel in the south wall is made of bricks cemented in a wooden frame. It is adequately disguised in poor light, but can be seen if a torch is used within 5 feet of it.

22. Store Room
A dusty hole full of old trunks, hat boxes and cases. Nothing relevant to the adventure is stored here.

23. Secret Room
This is a small compartment with a 4 foot high ceiling along the north side, reducing to less than 3 feet to the south. The room is empty, except for three feather dusters stacked in a corner. The top of the vertical shaft is accessible, but entry and exit from it requires difficult contortions. Peter is used to this manoeuvre and has no problems. Any other characters must make a successful Agility roll at -25% (CoC/DD — Climbing roll at half the normal probability) to pass. Anyone failing this will be stuck for 3d10 seconds and will be unable to use any weapons.

SUGGESTED ORDER OF EVENTS

Once the adventurers reach the house they should be able to make friendly contact with Tom pellew. When he is sure that they are innocuous, he will invite them in for a meal and a change of clothing. After the meal it will be discovered that the boat is damaged and that the adventurers must wait until morning for transport off the island. The adventurers will meet the other residents during the next few hours — the servants while arranging to get clothing dried, and the family and Barbara at breakfast — and get a rough idea of the family history (though no mention will be made of Peter). As the Pellews' launch is out of commission, John will invite the adventurers to stay overnight. Norma will invite them to attend a seance, especially if any of the adventurers have shown an interest in or have a public reputation for the occult.

Peter will be unable to resist one or two 'supernatural' interventions, such as moving the table, a ghostly cry of 'mama' from the doll mechanism or activation of the pianola. After the seance Peter will murder Norma and leave her body hanging in the locked nursery. The death will be discovered one hour later when John Pellew realises that his wife has not come to bed. Subsequent events are left to the referee, depending upon the nature and abilities of the adventurers. John may accept the 'suicide' note at face value, leaving the adventurers to guess that something is wrong, or may suspect one of the player characters. After all, they are strangers, and he does not know much about them. The adventurers may well suspect John, or other members of the household (Avril Baxter might wish to be sole heir, or Barbara Norris might wish that John was free to marry her). Some characters may suspect genuine supernatural involvement.

Meanwhile, Peter will do his best to fog the issue and leave everyone confused, if the suicide story is not accepted. He may kill the other heirs to the estate, preferably in circumstances which leave him with a good alibi or implicate others on the island. He has a preference for macabre murder methods. For example, he might stifle Tom Pellew on the porch and leave him in his rocking chair as though the old man were asleep, or drown John Pellew in the alligator tank in his laboratory.

The referee should play Peter Baxter as an intelligent, completely ruthless, killer. He will not take foolish risks, but he will not shy away from acts of appalling violence if he thinks these are required. The referee should also remind the players of their duty to protect Agnes Barnes, and the potential awkwardness of being strangers on an island with several local corpses when someone turns up, misjudges the situation and returns with the County Sheriff (the referee should invent statistics for this group, making them tough enough to make a confrontation too risky for the adventurers to be attempted by all except the most foolhardy).

SEANCES

The seance is a crucial element of this scenario. Its exact conduct is left to the referee, but the seance should be an eerie experience, played for its full duration. Characters will believe that genuine psychic forces are at work, and the referee should maintain a tight, tense mood. Peter is adept at faking phenomena, and will not make mistakes.

Norma sincerely believes that she has made contact with the afterlife. Her seances are conducted in the candlelit dining room, with a quiet dignity, aided and abetted by Avril. She always asks the characters present to hold hands, and then remains quiet for several minutes.

Norma puts herself into a trance (due to self-hypnosis), and then speaks in the voice of one of her children. In this state she is quite capable of answering questions, although her responses are child-like and somewhat vague about 'the afterlife'. She never answers questions about the future, or about things that a child would be not be expected to know. She generally remains in this state for 2d4x10 minutes. If using the Call of Cthulhu rules, this trance state expends 1-3 points of temporary POW. Peter tends to synchronise his tricks with the ends of the trance, to give them extra impact on Norma's none too stable mind.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Whatever happens, the adventurers must still get to Miami. When the trading boat arrives there are 84 hours left. The remaining journey of 120 miles is possible by hired car ($35), or by boat along the coast ($25). Either route allows the team to reach Miami 2d6 hours before the time of the execution. Since the plane has been reported missing, the thugs will assume that Agnes is dead, and they will reach Miami without further trouble. However, on arrival they will learn that the Governor reprieved Lucarotti on the previous afternoon. Lucarotti was found stabbed in his cell and died in the prison hospital 3 hours later....

GAME STATISTICS

Agnes Barnes was Lucarotti's secretary, but resigned on realising he was a gangster. She later heard he had been convicted of murder, but never bothered to learn the details. Agnes is intelligent and has a strong sense of justice. While she despises everything Lucarotti stands for, she does not believe he should be executed for crimes he did not commit.

She is 25, a brunette, height 5' 9", weight 125lb. Agnes was a student gymnastics champion. She carries $120, but no weapons or equipment.

Tom Pellew was conscripted into the Confederate army during the Civil War, but served with distinction, rising to the rank of Captain and receiving several decorations. He later joined the US Army, becoming a General under Theodore Roosevelt. He retired in 1900, on medical advice, but is still a relatively spry and alert old soldier.

Tom is 94 years old, height 5' 5", weight 130lb. He normally carries a shotgun, $15.23, a flask of bootleg whisky and a large tin of snuff.

Doctor John Pellew is a dedicated biologist, investigating the mysteries of regeneration. His work relates to amphibians and lizards, but he wants to develop a treatment to regenerate human limbs and organs. His work is funded by the family trust and grants from several universities (notably MIT, the Miskatonic University and the Sorbonne).

John Pellew is 52, height 6' 2", weight 170lb, and balding. He usually carries a hand lens, a pen knife and a pocket dissecting kit.

Norma Pellew is a quiet, religious person, unbalanced by the death of her children. She usually gives the impression that they are still alive, and talks of little else apart from spiritualism. She was always interested in spiritualism, but this has become an obsession thanks to Peter Baxter's cruel deception.

Norma is 45 years old, height 4' 11", weight 105lb. She wears a ruby necklace (value $1100), wedding ring ($230) and earrings ($125).

Avril Baxter is a quiet and slow woman. Her mother, Linda Baxter, died when she was born. Her father, Tom Baxter, blamed her for this and place her in a succession of convent schools until she found a job as a governess. With her seduction, pregnancy and the birth of Peter, her father again arranged matters, having the child admitted to an orphanage, and then he disowned Avril. She continued as a governess for 20 more years, then moved to Florida to help bring up John and Norma Pellew's children. After the children's deaths she stayed to look after Norma, and became her inseparable companion.

She is 51, height 5' 7", weight 175lb. Avril is a plump woman with varicose veins and a disapproving manner. She carries nothing of interest.

'Alex Phillips' (Peter Baxter) was raised in a harsh Florida orphanage, but he ran away and joined a theatrical company, where he learned the art of disguise. He then moved on to a life of crime, as a burglar and later a hit man for a New York mob, developing into a dangerous sociopathic killer who hated his family most of all. Peter also evaded military service during the Great War.

As Alex Phillips he pretends to be slow and somewhat stupid. His disguise is more a matter of posture and behaviour than make-up — he has a drooping moustache, walks slowly with stooped shoulders, keeps his hair untidy and chews tobacco. He has forged papers showing undistinguished service in the US Army.

He is 35, height 5' 11", weight 135lb. He is thin and wiry, but pretends to be slow and clumsy. Peter carries a sheath knife, a length of electrical cable (usable as strangling noose), two packets of tobacco and $120 (for use if a quick getaway is required).

If the party are very strong, Peter may have stolen one of the doctor's experimental serums, giving him a flawed power of regeneration. For all games this serum should restore 1-6 hit points per round, providing a wound has not reduced him to zero hit points, but have the side effect of ageing him six months per point restored. This rapid ageing could be one of the more horrific aspects of the adventure. In one playtest, for example, Peter, escaping in a police launch, was shot repeatedly, fell into the swamp, and was last seen as an old man, screaming 'Why can't I die?' as alligators dragged him under water.

Alice Sugden has worked as cook and housekeeper for for the Pellews for 14 years. She is a quiet woman with no unusual skills. She is 45, height 4' 11", weight 120lb.

Sylvester Potter is the butler, an alcoholic who occasionally steals whisky from the cellar. He tends to be silent and stay in the background (mainly to hide the smell of alcohol on his breath), and the adventurers should not be dissuaded from thinking there is something sinister about his behaviour. He is 44 years old, height 6' 4", weight 135lb, and quite bald. He carries $24.

Barbara Norris is John Pellew's striking secretary and lab technician. She is secretly in love with him, and keeps a diary which might make investigators think she has a motive for the murder of Norma Pellew. She is 27 years old, blonde, height 5' 6", weight 121lb. She doesn't carry any weapons. She has $35 in her handbag.

CALL OF CTHULHU

Alligator: Treat as a crocodile from Sourcebook, but divide STR, CON, SIZ and POW by 3, damage add +1D6

Agnes Barnes: STR 13; CON 13; APP 14; SIZ 9; INT 13; POW 11; DEX 12; EDU 15; SAN 65; Hit Points 13.
Read/Write English 95%, Read/Write German 70%, Read/Write French 60%, Speak German 55%, Speak French 40%, Library Use 45%, Linguist 30%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 55%, Type 85%, Dodge 85%, Jump 75%, Climb 55%, Swim 65%, Throw 60%

Tom Pellew: STR 7; CON 9; APP 9; SIZ 9; INT 17; POW 8; DEX 7; EDU 9; SAN 55; Hit points 9.
Speak Spanish 75%, Speak Mayan 25%, Linguist 10%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Weather Forecasting 85%, Bargain 35%, Credit Rating 35%, Debate 50%, Fast Talk 55%. All stealth and agility skills at half minimum due to poor health (heart condition). Shotgun 55%, Rifle 35%

John Pellew: STR 12; CON 14; APP 11; SIZ 14; INT 18; POW 13; DEX 13; EDU 19; SAN 35; Hit points 14.
Read/Write Russian 35%, Read/Write German 40%, Read/Write French 35%, Botany 80%, Chemistry 55%, Geology 25%, Library Use 65%, Linguist 20%, Pharmacy 25%, Pathology 35%, Treat Disease 20%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Photography 30%, Credit Rating 25%, Rifle 35%, Shotgun 45%

Norma Pellew: STR 6; CON 8; APP 12; SIZ 7; INT 11; POW 13; DEX 7; EDU 9; SAN 23; Hit points 7.
Cooking 45%, First Aid 45%, Occult 50%, Southern Baptist Religion 45%, Spiritualism 70%, Listen 50%, Needlework 75%, Singing 85%

Flare pistol (handgun): 1 shot/2 rounds, damage 2D6, Base chance 5%, Range 5yds, breakage 6, cost $12

Avril Baxter: STR 10; CON 13; APP 13; SIZ 12; INT 9; POW 8; DEX 9; EDU 11; SAN 40; Hit points 11.
Read/Write French 75%, Speak French 65%, Cooking 35%, Geography 55%, Occult 25%, Catholicism 45%, Spiritualism 40%, Listen 65%, Knitting 55%

Peter Baxter: STR 15; CON 17; APP 8; SIZ 8; INT 17; POW 14; DEX 16; EDU 12; SAN 32; Hit points 14.
Library Use 45%, Linguist 30%, Listen 85%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 60%, Track 20%, Drive Automobile 35%, Electrical Repair 35%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Camouflage 25%, Hide 90%, Move Quietly 85%, Pick Pocket 30%, Pick Locks 35%, Acting 85%, Fast Talk 40%, Climb 85%, Dodge 85%, Throw 60%, Revolver 55%, Shotgun 50%, Machine Gun 35%, Punch 75%, Kick 45%, Butt 65%

Alice Sugden: STR 9; CON 12; APP 7; SIZ 14; INT 11; POW 7; DEX 11; EDU 6; SAN 53; Hit points 13.
Cooking 85%, Embroidery 90%, First Aid 45%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Singing 45%

Sylvester Potter: STR 12; CON 8; APP 8; SIZ 11; INT 12; POW 10; DEX 11; EDU 12; SAN 50; Hit points 9.
Accounting 25%, Spot Hidden 20%, Shotgun 55%

Barbara Norris: STR 11; CON 11; APP 17; SIZ 10; INT 14; POW 11; DEX 15; EDU 16; SAN 55; Hit points 10.
SKILLS: Read/Write Russian 15%, Read/Write German 20%, Read/Write French 25%, Accountancy 45%, Botany 20%, Chemistry 25%, Geology 5%, Library Use 75%, Zoology 15%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Photography 25%

Flare pistol (found in the aircraft): Range 75', damage 6, rate ½, Ammo 1

Characters without Drive skill have never bothered to learn to drive.

Name	Mu	Ag	Ob	Pr	Dr	Lu	HP	Lv	Re	Mn	Mx
Alligator	95	45	20	—	—	25	19	—	—	—	—
Attacks as though Fighting Dirty with a small knife (6 points of damage + 3 points of wounds.											
Agnes Barnes	34	85	77	7	81	35	19	4	+2	—	—
Stealth 77%, Honest.											
Tom Pellew	26	55	66	6	—	40	19	6	—	—	11
Public speaking 55%, Public relations 37%											
John Pellew	36	93	88	8	90	35	18	7	—	—	—
Chemical analysis 55%											
Norma Pellew	33	37	35	6	—	14	12	1	—	—	—
Avril Baxter	48	52	65	2	—	22	15	1	-3	—	11
Peter Baxter	95	88	86	7	87	44	24	9	-5	—	8
Forgery 48%, Martial Arts 39%, Disguise 93%, Stealth 85%, Pick Pockets 30%, Pick Locks 35%											
Alice Sugden	33	57	32	2	—	21	15	1	—	—	—
Sylvester Potter	44	32	28	2	30	19	13	1	-2	—	—
Barbara Norris	28	43	82	5	63	34	13	1	—	—	—

INDIANA JONES

The opening scene of this adventure may have to be amended slightly to give characters the right incentive to go to Florida; some Indian relic, for example. The date should also be moved to sometime during the middle '30s — 1926 is a bit early for Indy to be running about.

No stats have been provided for this scenario. Tailor the individual encounters to the ability of your players, and be flexible. Feel free to introduce the usual car chases, plane crashes and strange houses; by the way, the judge should point out that jumping from the crashing plane on a raft with a foot pump is a sure way to end up dead — no escapes *à la* **Temple of Doom**.

Some specific rules changes are required. Treat Observations Rolls as Instinct Checks, halved or quartered as appropriate. Treat the named NPCs, with one exception, as non-violent Goons. The thugs chasing Agnes are Goons likewise, but not so quiet.

Alex Phillips / Peter Baxter is a villain, and a nasty one at that. His exact statistics depend on the player characters' attributes, armaments and attitudes, but he should be very stiff opposition for any two PCs on their own.

Lastly, there is one monster in IJAC1 which should prove very useful to the running of this adventure:

Alligator: ST 80; MV 56; PR 48; ATK Wnd+2 and Bash; BK 60; IN 36; Surv G; A bash is an extra attack (requiring an additional Prowess check) every other round that causes a Light Injury.

Alligators. Why did it have to be alligators.

CREDITS

Written by Marcus Rowland
Artwork by Kevin Hopgood
Cartography by Mark Burroughs

DAREDEVILS

Flare pistol: BBL short, Action SA, Break - 1 shot, Calibre 1.5", BDG 10 (but ammo $0.50/round), Weight 2lb

Alligator: Treat as a crocodile from rulebook, but Hlh 12, Dft 14, DRT 2 (2D10+5), CDA 1, Size 1, ½ damage from both attacks
All NPCs wear clothing appropriate to their station and profession (Peter wears dungarees, Sylvester Potter wears a morning suit, John Pellew wears a laboratory coat etc). Men's clothing is AV/2, women's is AV/1.

Agnes Barnes: WT 15; WL 10; STR 15; DFT 10; SPD 12; HLH 10; CDA 2; DRT 22.
German, French (14), All athletic skills (11), Criminal Subculture (4), Business Subculture (12)

Tom Pellew: WT 15; WL 10; STR 7; DFT 7; SPD 8; HLH 6; CDA 2; DRT 14.
Spanish (15), Mayan (5), Military Subculture (20), Shotgun (12), Rifle (8)

John Pellew: WT 15; WL 12; STR 9; DFT 17; SPD 9; HLH 14; CDA 2; DRT 24.
Russian, German, French (9), all Biological Sciences (15), Advanced Medical (7), Pathology (9), Chemistry (10), Academic Subculture (11), Shotgun (7), Rifle (9)

Norma Pellew: Treat as Poor Quality Extra with special knowled of Cooking, the Occult, the Southern Baptist Religion Spiritualism, a Needlework

Avril Baxter: Treat as an Average Quality Extra with special knowledge of French, Cooking, Geography, the Occult, Catholicism, Spiritualism and Knitting

Peter Baxter: WT 19; WL 17; STR 14; DFT 17; SPD 16; HLH 14; CDA 3; DRT 31.
Pistol (11), Shotgun (10), Autofire (6), Brawling (15/4), Criminal Subculture (16), Drive (7), Mechanic (9), Electrician (9), Stealth (17), Lockpicking (7).
This character should be presented as though he is a Poor Quality Extra.

Alice Sugden and **Sylvester Potter** are Average and Poor Quality Extras.

Barbara Norris: Treat as an Average Quality Extra with special knowledge of Russian, German, French, Accountancy, Botany, Chemistry, Geology, Zoology and Photography

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The title of this adventure was suggested by the SF story collection **A Nice Day For Screaming**, by James H Schmitz. Plot themes were suggested by the films **Ten Little Indians**, **Murder By Death** and **The Cat and The Canary**.

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The English Daredevil

by Chris Felton

An alternative for 20th Century roleplayers

One thing that annoys me is the way these damn colonials are constantly wittering on about their adventures in that era (the 1930s). Certainly, there were some fine fellows among them, like that archaeologist chap, Jones - although he wouldn't have lived too long if he wasn't the luckiest devil I ever met - and Jake Cutter, another good man, and a damn fine pilot. But the best of the soldiers of fortune were English.... or at least British....

From unpublished notes for an autobiography by General Sir Michael Hunt, VC, KCVO, this, that, the other and bar.

Being American games, rpgs such as **Daredevils**, **Justice Inc** and latterly, the **INDIANA JONES**™ game, have a clear American bias. All characters, they hint, are true-blue, all-American boys, with skills like American History and Autofire (for the gangsters among them).

But, as we all know, the good General is right. If you want a real 1930s hero, you want somebody English (or at least British....).

So here it is, a brief introduction to a few necessary tips for running British characters. Although written specifically for the **Daredevils** game, players of **Call of Cthulhu**, **IJ** or any other '30s game should be able to use most of the ideas with a little preparation. Throughout, all money has been referred to in dollar terms, in keeping with the rules. If you're interested, the exchange rate was about £1=$4.85.

Schooling

Astute readers of the rules for Daredevils will have noticed that although characters prepared under the basic set-up gain one skill each year from birth, under the advanced system they gain only 3-8 skills before leaving school. So, for both British and American characters, the first career should always be Schooling.

Schooling

Requirements: Birth
Cash: None
Income: None
Material Benefits: School contacts if education is Excellent (the right tie, don't you know....). These may turn up in any field
Automatic Skills: Starting skills from Character Background Table, substituting (nationality) Culture for American History (NB, this should apply to American characters too; substitute American Culture instead of History).
Available Skills: Any Athletic, Survival, Throwing (or bowling), any Construction, Mechanic, any Knowledge (GM must adjudicate justification), any Culture or Sub-Culture which fits character background. If Income $3000 or more: Horsemanship. Combat skills (particularly shooting or fencing) if character can justify it. D2 attribute points.

Certain skills must be justified in a way that fits the character's background. It would be very difficult for a child to learn Forensic Science, Occult Studies or (especially) Rhetoric. If a player wants a character to have a smattering of any of these, a convincing character life-history must be produced. No character may pick up any Medical skill except First Aid during schooling. Combat skills must always be justified, and be appropriate to the social class of the character. Such skills will never be increased during schooling.

For example, a character with a family income of less than $500 can justify a single level of Brawling skill ("we had a hard life in them days...."), and possibly Knife, but not Pistol. On the other hand, a character with an income over $5000 can justify Rifle skill and an increase; the skill from grouse hunting with relations out on the estate, the increase from rifle practice in the school Cadet Force.

If a character's attributes are improved while in school, some of the increase will merely pre-empt the improvements that come with age (child prodigies rarely become adult geniuses), so a year dedicated to increasing attributes will only gain D2 points, rather than the D3 an adult would gain.

Once through school, our British hero-in-the-making must begin his career. The first one is often College:

College

Essentially, we are just talking about Oxford or Cambridge here. Other universities will provide a perfectly good training, of course, but they don't look anywhere near as good on the old job applications....

A British university in the first half of the century was a more pressurised environment than its American equivalent, since the students were expected to work solely on their courses and have their fees paid by their parents; none of this working at other jobs to pay their way, as the American system was.

To reflect this, if a British character has a $3001-5000 background, and goes straight to University, he or she will have four years to get a degree. If unsuccessful, the character will have to leave, since parental funding will have ceased (the GM might allow a few exceptions to this). If the character is from a $5000+ family, the parents will provide support for the 2d6 years of the career period. If the character has already had one or more careers before entering university, then it will cost $500 a year in fees and upkeep to get through the university course.

In the first two years at university, our British character will pick up the following skills: Research, British Culture and four subjects (or less, with increases) in the degree field. To pass the degree, a successful BCS roll must be made in two of the degree subjects in the same year. From the third year onwards, all the Available Skills become available, but only one skill a year is attained.

Once out of University, a British character will go on to other careers in the same way as an American, except that the Great War will intrude as from 1914, and not two years later. From 1915, British characters will be subject to the draft unless in a reserved occupation: academic, business, law enforcement (for which, incidentally, British characters do not gain a revolver, bullet-proof vest, or any firearms skill), or politician; or out of the country as a big game hunter, explorer, soldier of fortune, missionary or merchant sailor. Any character not excluded by doing one of the above throughout the 1914-18 period will be called up in a random year 1915-18. Anyone not draftable in the normal way may interrupt their career to volunteer, of course.

British Daredevils will also have acquired different weapons from those favoured by the colonials. Most common of these will be the Army officer's Webley revolver and its automatic Navy counterpart:

Weapon	BBL	Action	Magazine	Calibre	BDG	Dur	Weight
Webley Mk 6	Stan	DA	swing-cyl 6	.455	10	4	1.0
Webley Auto	Stan	AL	box 7	.455	10	41.0	
and less commonly							
Lewis Gun	LMG	FA/2	47 drum 97 aero drum	.303	23	4	12.0

And finally, here are some additional careers open to Daredevils of any nationality:

Actor

Requirements: Wit + Comm + Esth = 36+
Cash: Reaction No + $50
Income: None
Material Benefits: Disguise Kit (20%)
Automatic Skills: Disguise, Mimicry
Available Skills: Acrobat, Stealth, Throwing, Modern languages, Rhetoric, European or American Culture, Entertainments Sub-Culture.

Barnstormer (stunt pilot):

(not available before end of Great War)

Requirements: Pilot BCS 10+
Cash: None
Income: None
Material Benefits: Stunt plane (disarmed fighter, 5%), Toolkit (20%)
Automatic Skills: Pilot, Mechanic
Available Skills: Modern language, Entertainments Sub-culture, Brawling

Dancer:

Requirements: Comm + Esth + Spd = 36+
Cash: Reaction No x $25
Income: None
Material Benefits: D3 attribute points (25%)
Automatic Skills: Acrobat, Mimicry
Available Skills: Climbing, Jumping, Running, Stealth, Disguise, Modern Language, European or American Culture, Entertainments Sub-culture

Missionary:

Requirements: None
Cash: None **Income:** None
Material Benefits: Bible (100%)
Automatic Skills: One Culture and associated Modern Language double score.
Available Skills: Carpentry, Anthropology, Linguistics, Survival, Theology, First Aid, Rhetoric, Farming (Wit + Natr + Scie)

Sailor (Merchant Navy):

Requirements: None (but characters with Good or better education enter as 4th Officer)
Cash: 1d6 x $25 x Rank no
Income: None
Material Benefits: None
Automatic Skills: Seamanship
Available Skills: Swimming, Gambling, Electrician, Mechanic, Modern Language, First Aid, Navigation, Knife, Brawling, Small Boat Handling (Wit + Dft + Natr)
Promotion: Each year the character must try to roll his Seamanship BCS to gain promotion. The ranks are:

Rank 1: Ordinary Seaman
2: Able Seaman
3: Mate
4: 4th Officer
5: 3rd Officer
6: 2nd Officer
7: 1st Officer
8: Master

Clubs

Part of the British way of life is the London club, and most prominent people are members of one or more. A player character will be a member of d4 (minus 1 if education is good, -2 if poor, -3 if minimal) clubs by the time they enter the game. A club is a place where a member and one guest (of the same sex) can go to be sure of finding good food, drink and conversation, in a suitably refined atmosphere. Membership is $100 per year, per club (membership can be suspended for any period while the character is away from England). A person wishing to join must be proposed by two members of good standing, and must be the right sort of person for the club. Regardless of standing, a character will be black-balled by all other members on a roll of 2 on 2d6.

Some of the better clubs are:
Army & Navy: 36 Pall Mall
Athanaeum: 107 Pall Mall
Carlton: 69 St James' Street
Cavalry & Guards': 127 Piccadilly
Garrick: 13 Garrick Street
Marylebone Cricket Club: St John's Wood
RAF: 128 Piccadilly
Royal Cinqueports Yacht Club: Dover
Royal Yacht Squadron: Cowes
St James': 106 Piccadilly
Traveller's: 106 Pall Mall
Turf: 5 Carlton House Terrace
United Service & Royal Aero: 116 Pall Mall
White's: 37 St James' Street

Women's Clubs

Empress: 29 Berkeley Square
Ladies' VAD: 44 Great Cumberland Place

Showman

(Fairs & Circuses)

Requirements: Will + Char + Comm = 40+
Cash: Reaction No + $50
Income: None
Material Benefits: Lorry (5%)
Automatic Skills: Rhetoric, Entertainments Sub-culture
Available Skills: Driver, Gambling, Carpenter, Electrician, Machinist, Mechanic, Disguise, Finance, Modern Languages, First Aid, Knife, Zoology, Animal Training, European or American Culture, Whip

Singer:

Requirements: Comm + Esth = 21+
Cash: Reaction No x $100
Income: None
Material Benefits: None
Automatic Skills: Singing (Comm + Esth + Comm)
Available Skills: Acrobat, Mimicry, Disguise, Modern Languages, European or American Culture, Entertainments Sub-culture

Chris Felton

TIME for the LITTLE PEOPLE...

...to fight the space-lane gangsters of the planet Ventura.

A gripping new short story by

Hilary Robinson

Learman strode angrily out to the landing pad where the shuttle stood hissing and panting, and ran up the steps. The Steward made a point of looking at his watch but Learman ignored him, making his way down the aisle looking for Yerus. The hatch clanged shut. *SEAT BELTS SEAT BELTS* **flashed the sign. Learman squeezed his large frame into the seat beside Yerus and grabbed for the straps. The shuttle took off in a way that was becoming infamous in the Jarvis System, that is, it went straight up, veered to port as if trying to pivot on a stubby wingtip, then shot skyward leaving the passengers gasping and clutching their stomachs. For those not securely strapped in, it resulted in a bang on the head and a resolve never to travel by McBain's Shuttle again.**

Learman expressed doubts on McBain's pedigree. The service panel in the back of the seat in front of him lit up and enquired politely if he required anything.

'Aspirin,' Learman said.

'You look bad. Burning up again?' the rotund lifeform in the next seat asked with some concern.

'I guess...' Learman said muzzily. The light hurt his eyes and there was a buzzing in his head. He lay back in the seat, eyes closed. The alien pressed a button on Learman's service panel. 'Issue blanket. Recline seat. And hurry up with the aspirin.'

The seat tilted back taking Learman with it and a folded blanket slid out from underneath. Yerus shook out the blanket and pulled it up over Learman. 'I told you that fever was still working on you.'

'Go play with the asteroids,' Learman muttered.

The Steward came up with a pill and a plastic cup. He glanced at Learman's flushed face and then at Yerus. 'What's wrong with him?'

'Headache,' Yerus said, reaching for the cup and tablet. The Steward hovered.

'Are you sure he's not sick?'

'I'm sure,' Yerus said. 'Thank you, that's all.'

The Steward shrugged and went away. Learman took the tablet awkwardly and lay back again. His breathing was quick and shallow. Yerus pressed little fingers with wide, sensitive tips against Learman's forehead. 'The sooner we get home to Coraris the better, you betcha.' He reclined his own seat, assumed an even more spherical appearance by retracting his arms and legs into his suit, and went into dormant phase.

The shuttle's cabin lights were on some two hours or so later when Learman groaned and struggled upright. The shuttle was decelerating. He twisted to see out the viewport over Yerus's spherical head but the poor quality pexiglass distorted the view so much that he couldn't recognise the star patterns. Still, even McBain's pilots ought to be able to navigate from the surface of Jarvis Outer to its orbital starport without getting seriously lost. He pushed off the blanket and returned his seat to the upright, but kept the seatbelt fastened. Yerus rocked gently beside him, looking like an overripe pumpkin in his orange vaccsuit. The seatbelt signs came on and he took Yerus on his knee. He judged the Pyan wouldn't come out of dormant phase for another hour or so and the straps, designed for Terrans, could injure him in a bad landing.

The shuttle landed in much the same manner as it took off, jarring every bone in the bodies of those passengers who possessed bones. Yerus slept through it.

'Thank you for flying with McBain's Shuttle Service,' said the Steward's voice on the intercom. 'We hope to have the pleasure of serving you again.'

'The pleasure was entirely yours,' Learman said malevolently to the Steward as he left with Yerus under his arm.

The *Centurion* lifted away from the starport with the minimum of fuss. Learman felt better after his sleep and though pale was steady. With the familiarity of long experience he took the *Centurion* outward-bound through the asteroid belt of Jarvis and lined up for a jump to Coraris. Yerus, swinging in the hammock seat beside him, sneezed twice and woke up.

'Huppy, huppy. Goin' home?'

'Yep.'

'Varlin soup,' Yerus said with evident relish.

'Steak with all the trimmings,' Learman responded.

'I don't know how you can bring yourself to eat the flesh of another sentient being —'

'Yerus.'

'Learman?'

'Shut up.'

'Cannibal,' Yerus said, and pretended to go back to sleep. However, a moment later he opened one eye and said, 'How did it go down there? Sector boss glad to see you in one piece?'

'Sector boss bloody furious over lost cargo. Called yours truly a disloyal worm, or words to that effect.'

Yerus opened both eyes. 'Disloyal? To what?'

'To Sector Haulage, to him.'

'How?'

'The cargo comes first.'

'Beg to differ. Lives come first.'

Learman nodded.

'You told Sector boss that there was a war on Cygnus Alpha Nine?'

'Of course I did! I told him he dropped us in it, in every sense of the word.'

'What did he say?'

'He said he couldn't know where every small, local skirmish was going to break out. It was just bad luck we happened to be flying armaments through a war zone.'

'Did he consider what might have happened if we hadn't ditched the crates?'

'He said a race as far back as the Niners who are only just developing powered flight wouldn't know what laser pulse rifles were.'

'It wouldn't take them long to find out,' Yerus said, 'but that's not the point. The penalties are very severe for landing hi-tech stuff on a low-tech world, and being forced down at gun point would be no defence. We'd lose our trading licence!'

'Yeah, perhaps that's what he hoped would happen.'

'You're not serious!'

'Am I not? There was also the chance that the Niners would kill us. Throwing us in that stinking pit while they searched the ship was bad enough. I don't want to think what they'd have done if they'd thought we were gun-running to their rebels.'

'Did you tell Sector boss what they did to us?'

'No,' Learman said shortly. 'See if there's anything to drink in the galley, will you?'

Yerus accepted the change of subject without comment.

Learman and Yerus sat in *The Traders' Rest* in Sondico, the planet-bound spaceport of Coraris.

CORARIS

It was the unofficial rendezvous of the pilots of Coraris Haulage. Yerus even had a special high stool, courtesy of the management, which enabled him to sit at a table and still see over the top of it. He never drank anything but mineral water and required large amounts of it daily to prevent dehydration. He had suffered badly from thirst on CA9.

He was well into his third pint when Don Kyle and Hendor Selazno came in. Kyle was the taller of the two, fair-skinned, mid-thirties, Terran; Selazno was a Jarvin, a soft-spoken humanoid with skin of a light purplish colour and four-fingered hands. They had been flying the *Legionnaire* since the formation of Coraris Haulage. Kyle saw them first. 'Learman! Yerus! There you are! Saw the *Centurion* on the pad.'

There were handshakes all round, a custom Yerus enjoyed greatly as he shook hands very enthusiastically. They seated themselves round the table.

'We heard you'd got caught up in an affair between the Alphans and that the *Centurion* had been "impounded for investigation". I take it you managed to dump the stuff in time? Good. Did they give you a rough time?'

'Not very pleasant,' Learman said. 'What's new here?'

Kyle and Selazno exchanged glances. There was a pause. Kyle said, 'Peter's dead.'

'What?!'

'Radiation sickness.'

'How...?'

'Undeclared cargo.'

'Sector contract?'

'Yes.'

Learman banged a fist on the table. 'Not again! I thought we'd sorted that out! They agreed — a complete manifest on *all* cargoes, especially dangerous ones!'

'I guess maybe — since you weren't here — they thought they'd try to slip one through.'

'But didn't Peter and Felix check it?'

'Of course they did. It was supposed to be normal Medikit cargo, toiletries, medicines, you know the sort of thing they do. It was well-sealed in proper containers and the documentation was in order, Felix says. But they had a near collision taking off from Ventura and Peter went down to the hold to check the load. One pod had broken loose and been damaged. He opened it to check and repack, and was just lifting the rods out when he realised what they were. By then he'd got a good dose, a lethal dose. He sealed it up and jettisoned the pod, but by then it was too late. He returned to Ventura, ship and crew were isolated and decontaminated. Felix is OK, at least they think so; Peter died yesterday, a week after it happened.'

'Felix is *physically* OK,' Selazno added with significant emphasis. They looked at him. Kyle shrugged. 'You'll see for yourselves. Just be careful what you say to him. The *Zouave* has been given the all-clear by the Safety Inspectorate, but he couldn't get a pilot to fly with him, so the ship's still on Ventura. We went to get him. He's still very shocked.'

'Poor Felix,' Yerus said quietly.

'You don't look great yourself, Learman,' Selazno said. 'You OK?'

'Yes, I'm OK. What work is there?'

'Have you heard about the new hypermarket yet?'

'A hypermarket? Here?'

'Sure,' Kyle said, 'why not? Think of how many people pass through Coraris in a year. Granted they're all going somewhere else and who's to blame them, but if there was something to stop off for in Sondico — well, I think it's a good idea. It should generate a lot of trade. We're starting to bring in construction workers next month. I tendered for the contract in your absence...'

'That was right,' Learman said. 'And you got it? Good! Where is it to be built?'

'Out in the mountains.'

'Why not in Sondico?'

'Sondico is a little short on tourist sights. The one thing that will make the weary traveller stop, look and marvel is the Moonwatch. Sunrise, sunset and moonrise are all well-known Coraris phenomena because of the water-ice belt.'

'You mean people would stop off in this dreary hole just to watch pretty colours in the sky?'

'Why do you fly with this barbarian, Yerus?' Kyle asked.

'He's a poor, harmless fool,' Yerus said kindly. 'Now I, being a student of culture and beauty, had heard of the Coraris Moonwatch long before I ever came here.'

'Bully for you,' said Learman moodily. 'Anything on the schedule for us to do yet?'

'No. There's only two ships out at the moment. The *Janissary*'s out by Kelver, picking up the architects and designers, and the *Hoplite* is collecting rock samples in the mining sector of Gabrielle. Business is slow.'

Learman pulled a face.

'Yeah,' Kyle agreed. 'Can I get you two a drink? Yerus, another pint of bilge water? Learman?'

'Not for me, thanks,' Learman said. He had begun to feel unwell again and his hands were gripped together on the table to stop them shaking. Yerus glanced at him and looked up at Kyle. 'Thank you, no. Since there's no immediate work, I think we should go home and get a good rest.' There was a commotion by the door, voices raised and a sway of movement towards them.

'It's Felix,' Selazno said quietly. A white-faced young man wove his unsteady way towards them. Kyle caught his arm.

'Leggo!' Felix tugged his arm free and almost overbalanced.

'Sit down, Felix!' Kyle hissed, pulling him down. 'If anyone sees you like this, you'll lose your licence.'

'Who wants t'fly in a deathship?' Felix slurred, putting his elbows on the table and his head in his hands.

'Stop that!' Kyle said angrily, shaking him. 'Hendor, see if Joe will give you a cup of coffee for him. Black.' Selazno got up.

Learman stared at Felix, amazed that anyone could have aged so much in a few weeks. The boy's face was lined and there were dark shadows under his eyes. He hadn't shaved. Learman wanted to say something, something about Peter, something useful, but his head seemed to be stuffed with cotton wool. Yerus spoke for both of them.

'We have only just heard about Peter. We are distressed by his death.'

'Murder.'

'Pardon?'

'His murder,' Felix repeated. 'He was murdered by Medikit Chemicals of Ventura and a million other places. And all to save the miserable price of the Dangerous Load Excess. What're you going to do about it, Learman?'

'Me?'

'You got the agreement, didn' you? No undeclared cargoes? You tol' us you did. Wassit jussa whitewash?'

'Take it easy, Felix,' Kyle said.

'What're you gonna *do*, Learman?' Felix insisted.

'What did you have in mind?' Learman asked quietly. 'Declare war on Medikit? It's Sector's fault for accepting undeclared cargo without checking it, and passing it on to us as safe. Our agreement is with Sector Haulage, not Medikit. I've just come back from seeing the Chief of Sector Haulage on Jarvis Outer on another matter and I'm not the best one to be putting your case just at this m-moment.'

Yerus seemed to be the only one who noticed the slight stammer. He began to push the drinks glasses together in the middle of the table.

'Come on, Learman,' he said, sliding off the stool.

'You can't jus' run out on us,' Felix cried, catching at Learman's sleeve as he got up. Learman staggered and put a hand on the table to steady himself. 'I'm not going anywhere,' he said angrily, 'except to bed. Come and see me when you're sober.'

'I'm perfeckly capable of —'

'Sure,' Learman said. He patted Felix on the shoulder and squeezed past. Kyle watched them go, the small, round Pyan and the tall, broad-shouldered Terran. As ill-matched a pair as ever flew the tradelanes. By the door Yerus dropped back for a second and spoke briefly to Selazno at the bar.

Selazno came back with a mug of coffee which he set before Felix who was slumped over the table, his head on his arms. 'Learman's sick,' he said over Felix's head.

'I thought he didn't look well,' Kyle said. 'What's up with him?'

'Yerus thinks it's a thing called Damp Fever. There's a lot of it on the Cygnus Alpha worlds.'

'What is it? Is it infectious?'

'No, it's some sort of parasitic infestation that you get from dirty water. It does something to the blood. It takes months to clear, though, depending on the victim's natural defences. I've only heard of it getting a hold on people who were suffering from malnutrition or whose general resistance to infection was low.'

'I shouldn't have thought that described Learman,' Kyle said.

'He's got thinner, though, and he's very pale. Yerus didn't seem his usual bouncy self either. Maybe the Niners gave them a hard time.'

'We're all disintegrating,' Kyle said gloomily. 'Coraris Haulage is in a bad way, only two ships working out of five, Peter gone, Learman sick and Felix stoned out of his mind.'

'Shall we get this coffee into Felix and walk him home?'

'He's asleep,' Kyle said, poking a snoring Felix. 'Be easier to wake the dead.'

Learman slept fitfully in the grip of the fever. Involuntary tremors shook him and his skin was hot and dry to the touch. Twice during the night he woke, shivering violently, and Yerus made him drink water with a strong pyretic in it, and by the morning he was cooler and awake, but he ached in every joint and felt as if he hadn't slept for a week. He got up and staggered into the kitchen where Yerus was watching breakfast TV.

'Feel better?'

'Yeah. Thanks, Yerus. You ever think of taking up medicine as a career?'

'Good bedside manner, ha? "Drink this, or I'll punch your face in!" You think that would go down well with other sick Terrans besides you?'

'On second thoughts, stick to negotiating contracts. Is the coffee hot?'

'Yes. Learman... what are you planning to do about Peter's death?'

'I dunno. Sue Medikit.'

'We can't do that.'

'Why not?' Learman poured the scalding liquid carefully.

'It would cost a fortune!'

'Not if we won.'

'Oh come on Learman! Even if we won, it would take months. We couldn't afford the legal fees, we'd be in debt after the first week! The only

CORARIS

ones who could sue would be Sector Haulage; the contract was with them, but you know *they* won't sue. They'd be afraid of losing their lucrative contracts with the multi-world companies.'

'Then Coraris Haulage will sue alone for the death of one of its pilots!'

'Be sensible! All you'll do is lose the company. Coraris Haulage is five ships, ten crew. It's more of a co-operative than a company. All of us together couldn't raise the capital to hire even a mediocre lawyer, and without a lawyer at least as good as Medikit would employ, we might even lose the case. We don't even have the container as proof.'

'All right then,' Learman said wearily. 'Let's hear your suggestion.'

'Destroy Medikit (Ventura) Ltd.'

'How?'

'By destroying the public's faith in their products.'

'Yerus, are you sure you're not ill, too? Those two weeks in that pit —'

'Learman,' Yerus said softly. 'You know me better than that.' He turned his full moon-face to Learman. The eyes were as round and bright as new silver dollars, and as cold. Yerus acted the good-natured moron most of the time but underneath it all he had a mind like a steel trap and once set on a course, nothing deterred him.

He had been fond of Peter Ellis. Peter and Felix were the two youngest pilots of Coraris Haulage but right from the start they had pulled their weight and taken their share of the worst runs with the others. Yerus had spent some time teaching Peter about contracts and invoices and accounts while Learman had worked with Felix on navigation, trading law and how to stay out of serious trouble. It hadn't been enough. Peter was dead, in the kind of incident Learman had fought so hard to avoid and it seemed to have depressed him. Yerus, on the other hand, was strongly motivated to revenge.

He looked at Learman, hunched over his coffee. For twenty years Learman had flown the spacelanes, struggling to earn a living and stay independent of the big boys who swallowed up little companies like Coraris Haulage without a second thought. But Learman had valued his integrity and independence above everything else, and kept his company. He hadn't made a fortune, but he made sufficient to ensure that the ships were properly maintained and the crews regularly paid. He knew well enough that there wasn't enough money to fight Medikit in the courts. It worried Yerus to see him so low. He was having to cope not only with the parasites inside him, sucking his blood, but those outside, Sector Haulage and Medikit to name but two, who wouldn't give a damn if he went under.

'What are you thinking?' Yerus asked anxiously.

Learman removed his gaze from the black depths of his coffee cup.

'Just... how pointless it all is. In the end it all boils down to money. If you have it, you can ride roughshod over anybody and get away with it. Without it, you can't even get simple justice.'

'Now I know you're really sick, Learman! I've never heard you talk like that before. I will just have to do the thinking for both of us until you recover.'

'God, I feel old. And tired.' He rested his elbow on the breakfast bar and his head in his hand.

'You'll feel better in a day or two,' Yerus lied cheerfully. 'Do you want to hear my plan?'

'Go ahead. I'm listening.'

'First, I contacted the newsagency during the night to place an advert for a replacement for Peter. I didn't say so, but we need someone who can lie with a straight face.'

'What?'

'Then, we wait for Medikit to put out a job to tender.'

'What?? I'm never going to carry their stuff again!'

'Oh yes you are, and on the *Zouave* too. Everybody knows our financial position and no-one will be surprised if we put in a low bid. Naturally Medikit will take the lowest tender, being a bunch of cheapskates anyway, and we will fly their stuff in and out for about six months.'

'Why six months?'

'I have calculated that that is about as long as we can afford to fly at cost. Also, we don't use the *Zouave* for any other cargo during that time.'

'What if Medikit doesn't generate much business?'

'That's a risk we have to take. I don't guarantee that it's not risky.'

'And after six months?'

'Aha!'

'What does that mean?'

Yerus told him.

Learman did not exactly leap off the stool in enthusiasm. 'Do you realise what you're asking?' he said quietly.

'Yes,' said Yerus. 'I'm asking you to risk the Company, everything we've worked for all these years. You may not think revenge on Medikit is worth such a terrible gamble, and if you say no, then I accept that.'

Twenty years of my life, Learman thought, that's what he's asking for. And what good will it do? It won't bring Peter back. Peter Ellis was such a small cog in a small wheel that Medikit don't even feel obliged to offer blood money. But he was one of us, one of the little people, and if we stick together we can topple the giant. If I were twenty years younger and just starting out again, I wouldn't even be turning it over in my mind. I'd have said yes immediately. What's happened to me? Has the company become more important than the people who work in it? Shame, Learman...

He looked across the little kitchen at Yerus, watching him with anxious, round eyes. He's waiting to see if I've changed, betrayed my principles. Dammit, how ill does he think I am?

'You're an evil little gnome, Yerus, and you make life worth living.'

After breakfast Yerus went off to bed in the sort of hanging basket he called his nest, and Learman went to the bank and to the spaceport Central Office to settle up for the fuel and fees. He walked stiffly but tried to move as briskly as possible. Coming out of Central Office he literally bumped into a harmless, if irritating know-all of long acquaintance by the name of M David Rolandson, Esquire.

'Learman! You're back! I heard you had a bit of bother on CA9?'

'That's right.'

'Barely out of the Dark Ages those Niners. Still go in for obscene rites at the equinoxes, you know.'

'Really,' Learman said expressionlessly, walking on.

Rolandson trotted beside him. 'Did you know that they keep their criminals in holes in the ground with a big iron grid over the top?'

Learman could almost smell the claustrophobia. His heart pounded. One more word, he thought savagely, one more *word* about it and I'm going to put my fist through that smiling inane face of yours.

'Sorry to hear about young Ellis, though,' Rolandson said. 'Nice boy.'

'Yes.'

'Is his co-pilot okay?'

'A bit distressed — you understand.'

'Well, yes, he would be, wouldn't he, his partner being poisoned like that. Makes you shiver just to think of it. Rrrrr!' and he did so. Give me strength, Learman thought.

'Anyway, how's business?' Rolandson said cheerfully.

'Bad,' Learman said heavily, knowing that by this time tomorrow, half the starport would know of Coraris's financial problems. 'I have to take anything I can get just to keep the rigs flying. We're going to have to offer very competitive prices. You don't know of anyone looking for a carrier...?'

'Sorry, no, not at present, but I'll keep the old ear to the ground,' Rolandson said seriously.

'Thanks,' Learman said. 'Excuse me, I have to go in here.'

'What are friends for?' Rolandson called. 'See you around.'

He returned home in the late afternoon to find Yerus awake and preparing a meal. He did his best to make his vegetarian dishes appealing to Learman, who basically did not like vegetables. 'There was a call for you,' Yerus said over his shoulder. 'A reply to the advert.'

'Anyone we know?'

'Someone you know well. Kim Denby.'

'Oh.'

'Don't say "oh" like that. She's the very one we need. She's got the sort of innocent, childlike face that no-one could disbelieve. If she told you day was night you'd believe her.'

'I did once.'

'Oh come on, don't be such a sore loser. She's a good pilot and she knows the work. And besides...'

'What?'

'She's willing to put a quarter of a million into the company.'

'How much??'

'A quarter of a million.'

'Where would she get money like that?'

'Her husband left it to her.'

Learman took a moment to digest that. 'Jake Denby's dead?'

'Yes, three months ago. Coronary.'

'You appear to have interviewed her already,' Learman said coldly.

'We just had a chat. She's coming round at seven to be interviewed. And Felix is coming at eight. He called earlier to apologise.'

Learman sat down. 'You appear to have everything organised.' First Kyle with the contract and now Yerus with the crews. He was beginning to feel redundant.

'You know I wouldn't promise her anything without your approval. But she'd be a good co-pilot for Felix, old enough to settle him, young enough not to mother him. What do you say?'

'I reserve judgement.'

'Just promise me not to argue with her all the time.'

'Me? She's the one who —'

'I'll have it stipulated in the contract,' Yerus said. 'No arguing with Learman.'

On the dot of seven, Kim Denby stood at the door of the apartment. Learman could see her through the security glass although she couldn't see him. She wore a green trouser suit and her dark auburn hair framed her face. She hadn't changed. She took a deep breath, and rang the bell. He waited for a moment and then opened the door.

'Hallo, Kim.'

'Hallo, Alex.' She was the only one who ever called him that. 'Let the Prodigal return?'

'Yerus — kill the fatted calf!'

'Not another cannibal!' came the voice from the kitchen.

At eight Felix arrived, smartly dressed and clean shaven. He seemed surprised to find a young

CORARIS

woman present, but nevertheless he made a formal apology for getting drunk and shouting at Learman.

'Forget it,' Learman said, and they shook hands. 'Felix, this is Kim Denby, your new co-pilot. Kim, Felix Lovat.'

Felix mastered the shock manfully and shook hands with her. 'Ms Denby.'

'Kim.'

'Welcome aboard the *Zouave*, Kim.'

'She was a pilot of Coraris Haulage before, until she ran out on me.'

'I didn't run out on you, Alex! I left to get married.'

'Same thing.'

'Well, I'm back now, not in the *Janissary* but still in the war band. Have you a job for us?'

Learman glanced at Yerus who grinned inanely. 'Boy!' said Learman, 'Have we got a job for you!'

Some six months later, in the middle of a mild winter by Coraris standards, Kim and Felix began to complain of headaches and nausea. On coming out of a visit to the starport Medico, Kim happened to meet M David Rolandson, who was very sympathetic and more than interested in her symptoms. A week later they were so widely known that no-one would sit within three tables of either of them in the canteen. Kim affected to be very puzzled by this ostracism and kept asking pitifully why her headaches bothered everyone so much. When the symptoms continued despite general medication, the Medical Officer, being a thorough man, requested the *Zouave*'s log book, read about Peter Ellis's death and immediately grounded the ship for thorough examination. On being told she would have to go into isolation forthwith, Kim cried inconsolably (and publicly), and had to be taken away by Felix. A couple of strangers who happened to be in the centre at the time thought she was being taken away against her will and intervened, and at some point Felix caused a chair to be flung through a window and the starport Security Police were called. It was all good publicity. There being very little of anything newsworthy in Coraris in midwinter, the press made a field day of it. Learman denied everything by punching a journalist in the mouth and that gave him the notoriety to be asked to appear on local TV, the programme being networked to the entire Jarvis system.

The interviewer was determined not to mince his words in the hope that Learman would floor him too, which would greatly increase his chances of promotion to a better channel.

'Mr Learman, I put it to you that you endangered the lives of two of your crew by making them work on a contaminated ship.'

'Nonsense! The ship was thoroughly scrubbed and checked after the last... ah... incident. I have every faith in the safety inspections carried out afterwards.'

'Then how do you account for the symptoms complained of by your pilots?'

'Flu?'

'Come now, Mr Learman, isn't it true that the *Zouave* was so badly contaminated by radio-activity that a pilot actually died?' Learman looked uncomfortable. 'Well, yes, but — '

'And isn't it true that the Safety Inspectorate has grounded the ship again for further contamination screening?'

'Yes...'

'Then I put it to you that it is possible that the *Zouave* is still contaminated.'

'We will have to await the Inspectorate's report, but if you want my — '

'We appreciate you being honest with us, Mr Learman. As you can imagine, the matter is of some concern to our viewers. Now if, and I am only saying *if* the Zouave is contaminated, I assume that the cargoes would be likewise affected?'

'My cargoes are not affected!' Learman said angrily. 'My ship is *not* contaminated!'

'How many cargoes have you carried in the last six months, Mr Learman?'

'I don't know! A couple of dozen, I suppose.'

'All for Medikit Chemicals?'

'Yes.'

'And what sort of things were in these cargoes?'

'You know as well as I do what Medikit makes! Soap, shampoo, headache tablets, ant-acids, toothpaste, baby-food...'

'Are you certain that these are the only goods that could have been contaminated?'

Learman jumped up and shouted, 'Medikit's goods are not contaminated! My ship is clean! It's a conspiracy! Someone is spreading this vicious lie to ruin my business!' He turned a glaring eye on the interviewer, who backed his chair away. 'I wouldn't be surprised if *you* made this up as a media hype! Or maybe it's one of the big haulage companies, jealous of the reputation I've built up for good delivery times and straight dealing. I don't know who started this stupid rumour but when I find out I'm going to pound him to a jelly and crate him off to Webb's World and feed him to the penguins!' Learman, towering over the terrified interviewer, looked just the man to do it.

He turned and looked straight at the camera. 'In two weeks' time you're going to see this man here, Brock Stevens, apologise publicly to me when he reads out the report of the Safety Inspectorate. Don't you worry out there. Your babyfood isn't radioactive!' and he strode out of the studio.

The camera panned back to Brock Stevens, quickly regaining his composure. 'Well, viewers, there you have one opinion, forcefully put. Will we be back here in two weeks as Mr Learman says, apologising to him? Make a note to tune in to this channel. In the meantime, the Safety Inspectorate has this advice for you. Don't panic. If you experience any of the following symptoms, consult your own doctor. Headache, nausea, dizziness, loss of appetite, bleeding of the gums, hair loss...'

That night, Learman and Yerus watched the financial news with more than usual interest. Medikit's shares fell 25%. Although they recovered a few points the next day, the inexorable slide was on. Three days later, Medikit was forced to buy time on the airways to reassure people that samples of their products, carrying the date label of the period concerned, had been thoroughly tested and proved to be clean. There was absolutely no need to worry. But, said the smiling company executive, just to demonstrate their good will, Medikit would replace free of charge any item bought in the last six months which the purchaser felt unhappy about.

The next night the newscast carried pictures of Medikit's warehouse on Ventura being besieged by thousands of yelling people, waving bottles and spraycans.

'They can't all have bought stuff in the last six months!' Learman said.

'Who's going to look at the date label?' Yerus said. 'Anyone with an empty can is out to get a replacement free.'

Learman looked doubtful. 'I didn't mean to start a panic.'

'That's not panic, Learman, that's greed. Medikit has made the basic mistake of under-estimating the amount of natural dishonesty in the majority of the population. It will cost them a *fortune* to replace all those goods. It's a good job we made them pay the haulage cash on delivery. I wouldn't like to be one of their creditors now!'

A week later, Medikit Chemicals (Ventura) Limited went into receivership and ceased trading, and four days later Kim and Felix were released from isolation, no further symptoms having occurred since they were put under observation. Learman was invited to the TV studio to hear the Inspectorate's report read out on the news. He was interviewed after it.

'The report of the Safety Inspectorate says that there is no sign of radiation on your ship and no indication that there had been any since the ship was cleared six months ago. How do you feel about that?'

'I hate to say I told you so, but...' Learman smiled benignly.

'I know you never doubted for a moment that it was a malicious lie, Mr Learman, but how do you account for the scare?'

'I told you I thought you people did it to make some news.'

'We wouldn't do a thing like that —'

'Wouldn't you?' Learman reached out suddenly and grabbed the young interviewer by the lapels and pulled him nose to nose. 'I owe you a favour, son,' he whispered before the microphone could follow them. Aloud he said, 'Your scaremongering has cost us a lot of business, not to mention the worry and distress caused to the good people out there.' He pointed to the camera. 'This is for the unnecessary worry you've given *them*!' and he punched Stevens hard enough to topple him over the back of his chair. He turned to the camera. 'Don't listen to any more lies about Coraris Haulage,' he told the people quietly. 'We do the job and we do it efficiently. Goodnight.'

'Loved the commercial,' Yerus greeted him. 'You plenty good talker, you betcha.'

'And you — are a genius, you evil little goblin.'

Yerus bounced up and down with pleasure and beamed right across his moon-face. 'Time for the little people to stand up and be counted, right?'

'Right.'

'Huppy, huppy.'

It would be an exaggeration to say that from that time Coraris Haulage's problems disappeared, but there were more manifests carrying the words *DANGEROUS LOAD EXCESS* across them and the crews were properly prepared to cope with an emergency. The construction and eventual opening of the hypermarket, and the chance for tourists to enjoy the Moonwatch in comfort, engendered a sizeable increase in trade and brought a new prosperity to Sondico. Even the young interviewer got his promotion, and his missing front tooth, which he never bothered to get replaced, became his professional trademark.

Yerus watched him chair a political debate. 'You know, Learman, it never ceases to amaze me how your race seems to thrive on ill-fortune.'

'What?' Learman asked from behind a pile of invoices.

'Well, it took Peter's death and your illness to make you realise you were in danger of becoming a money-grubbing capitalist. And it took a biff in the mouth to get Brock Stevens his own chat-show. I think I'll call it Yerus's Law. 'All Terrans benefit from a kick in the head now and again.'

Hilary Robinson

Hilary Robinson also wrote Starwing & Enter (IMAGINE magazine #10) and has had work published in the BSFA's Focus and in a number of fanzines.

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MARVEL SUPER HEROES™: Cat's Paw

One of the problems that TSR are encountering with their MARVEL SUPER HEROES range of modules is that there are rather a lot of Marvel characters. Each buyer is likely to have a favourite, and having each module tailored to a particular group of characters will tend to restrict its appeal. What do you do, for example, about Alpha Flight? Their popularity hardly rivals that of the X-Men or Avengers, but there are still lots of Alpha Flight fans out there clamouring for a module.

Well, Jeff Grubb does spend a paragraph in the introduction to **Cat's Paw** explaining that you don't have to use Alpha Flight and indeed he is right; with very little modification of the plot I managed to run the scenario for the Fantastic Four instead. I missed out on a little bit of the significance in the final encounter because the enemy in question was very closely related to Alpha Flight's characters, but other than that, no problem. This sort of thing is by no means obvious when you are looking at a module on a shop shelf which is why I'm spending a lot of time explaining it here. Some modules cannot be run with other characters because the plot depends on the abilities and histories of the given Heroes. This one can be modified, so don't worry if you've never heard of Alpha Flight before.

So, what about quality? Well, the production is up to the usual high standard with the useful addition of little cut-out character information cards for the players. The plot is somewhat variable. There is a reasonable amount of political interest to relieve the monotony of the slugfests, and also some nice atmospheric touches, although these are somewhat spoilt by the 'read this to players' boxes which contain the sort of purple prose that will have the players cringing rather than entranced. However, there are a few places where plot continuity seems to rely rather too heavily on players doing what the author expected. The ending is rather tough and needs very careful handling by the GM. All in all, slightly above average for MSH, but not their best.

Pete Tamlyn

MARVEL SUPER HEROES: Pit of the Viper

Gee! Wow! Super-fantastic! Just what I always wanted, a set of Adventure Fold-Up™ Figures for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game! Mummy, will you cut them out for me, please?

Okay, stop laughing, there is a serious side to this as well. In fact **Pit of the Viper** is a very schizophrenic product. On the one hand, the packaging, trademark, etc, suggests that it is targeted at a very young market; on the other, there is an MSH module there too and one which, unlike the usual fare, expects the GM to do a lot of work. Pit of the Viper only provides the setting and a few plot ideas and this suggests a requirement for a much more sophisticated user than the standard modules. Fortunately, it works fairly well on both levels. Very young kids, once someone has assembled the figures for them, will probably be happy to play away and ignore the scenario. For those of us who want to role-play the cardboard figures make very useful play-aids.

The basic set-up is an underground lair used by Viper and her terrorist cronies, the Nihilists. Leaving aside Kim Eastland's total ignorance of Nihilism which must have poor Nietzsche turning in his grave, the scenario provides an interesting challenge for the more streetwise, pugilist type of superhero (Daredevil or Cap for example), there being no super-powered villains involved. However, much of the scenery provided is directly useful in almost any scenario. Having a blank floorplan on which you position wall units to make rooms makes the set-up very flexible. All the figures are very nicely produced and far outshine the character counters provided with the basic game. A small gripe — the printing on the back of the card doesn't quite line up with that on the front, but otherwise a solid, useful product.

So, TSR, when are we going to see an Adventure Fold-Up pack of Marvel Heroes and Villains? Better still, why not include a couple of cards of Adventure Fold-Up figures and scenery with each module? It would be very kind of you.

Pete Tamlyn

Product Information

Cat's Paw and **Pit of the Viper** are supplements for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, costing £2.95 each from TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD

This address is for your information only;
all TSR products should be available from your local hobby shop

AD&D®: Dungeon Master's Screen (Revised)

This three-part game accessory now consists of Dungeon Master's Screen, Player's Screen and a covering sheet which provides a summary of player character abilities. The last item lists the prime requisites for each class, and then gives a summary of the abilities they gain at various levels. I myself found this a useful aid to memory, though I think it would have been nice if some indication of the possible races for each class could have been given, possibly a reproduction of the limitations table which appears in the **Players Handbook**, and in addition reproductions of the tables for possible armour and weapon types. Quite where they would find room to fit them I don't know: there is a space large enough to put one table on, and I guess that with some clever editing the other two could have been squeezed in. I suppose it's all a matter of knowing where to draw the line.

Less useful to me is the Players Reference Screen, which I find an odd concept to begin with. What have the players to screen? Spells, equipment lists and details of weapons are given, plus the attack matrix summary and a surprising amount of space given over to grenade-like missiles. Speaking as someone who covered his Players Handbook reference sheets with clear plastic some years ago, I find very little of any use here bar the attack matrix. I don't know how the grenade-like missiles part got in at all; I don't remember the last time I had to use these rules. I would have thought the space could have been better used, perhaps in printing the six ability adjustments tables to save us all the trouble of filling out our character sheets.

Which brings us to the Dungeon Master's Screen. No surprise perhaps that three quarters of the tables are devoted to combat, but since the DM's Guide reference sheets bear tables which are as much use as sunglasses down a coal mine, at least the tables are useful this time, and I have used them and will continue to do so. The fourth quarter of the tables are a useful collection which the DM might well have cause to refer to at several points during a session, and I am forced to find this the most useful component of the three.

Jez Keen

AD&D®: The Lost Island of Castanamir

C3: The Lost Island of Castanamir is a competition module intended for 5 - 8 characters of 1st to 4th level, though it could easily be incorporated into a campaign. Being a competition module, though, it's designed to be tough so that not everyone will survive and if used with regular campaign characters I suggest that they be a level or so higher than the pre-rolled ones provided.

The module is set below ground in a system of rooms which should mess up the players' maps quite nicely. Because of the topography of the place, each room is virtually a separate encounter and this makes the adventure somewhat disjointed. Also, it being a very magically orientated place, some of the situations can be difficult to DM, often due to them not being fully thought-through by the designers. Several of the encounters are also described rather ambiguously and the DM must read the module carefully before play and decide how to treat each situation.

The module introduces an interesting class of creature which forms a central part of the action and if it's to be used as part of a campaign these creatures are almost certain to become a permanent feature. For this reason I would suggest prospective DMs think very carefully before using the module in this way.

Eight well laid out tear-out characters are provided. It's interesting to note that although each character has a description of character traits, no alignment is given: a sign of things to come in the revised AD&D game, perhaps?

If you are specifically looking to purchase a competition module, C3 is a good buy. However, I wouldn't recommend it for a proper campaign.

Chris Hunter

Product Information:

Products reviewed here are all for the AD&D game, distributed by TSR UK Ltd, address on the previous page. The **Dungeon Master's Screen, DL5: Dragons of Mystery** (for the **DragonLance** campaign) and **C4: Quest For a King** each cost £4.95; **C3: The Lost Island of Castanamir** costs £3.95

DRAGONLANCE™:

At first sight, you could be forgiven for thinking that **DL5: Dragons of Mystery** is the next module to play in the DragonLance series. That it is not. It is the 'Source Book' for the saga, containing all sorts of useful information for DMs and players of the campaigns.

The first thing you find when opening the booklet is a large colour map of the World of Krynn. Now, for the first time, we get to see the entire continent of Ansalon and realise that only a very small part of it has so far been revealed to us. Although interesting and thought-provoking, this map will be of little use to anyone running one of the first four DragonLance modules. Whether it will be useful at some later date remains to be seen.

The Source Book itself is laid out in five sections. First comes a Dungeon Master's guide to the series. It opens with an introduction to the authors and how the series was devised, written and play-tested, and includes a suggested breakdown of the first four modules into play sessions, which interestingly coincides almost exactly with how we ran the modules when playing them. The rest of the section comprises various pieces of information that has been harvested from **DL1-4** and placed in the Source Book along with a few new items and some hints at how to play various situations that might arise.

Also included in this first section is a list of mistakes that crept into the first four modules and the corrections that should be made. Not so useful for those who have already played those modules, but worth noting if you are about to start running one of them.

The next two sections contain a description of the history of Krynn from its creation to the present, and details of the gods of Krynn. All useful background information that the DM and players can use to add colour to their campaign.

Part four is a chapter especially written for players of the pregenerated

AD&D®: Quest For a King

The High Council is floundering, the populace is restless, the Monks are getting excited about an ancient prophesy they've rediscovered, and so a group is assembled to restore the Celtic kingdom of Pellham to its former glory.

Each of the four scenarios in **C4: Quest For a King** should take three-and-a-half hours to play under tournament conditions, longer in campaign play. One thing I found was that play became unnecessarily bogged down in combat. It should be remembered, when playing a competition module such as this (it comprises the first four rounds of the GEN CON™ XVI AD&D Open Tournament), that it will be geared towards separating good players from the rest, and will perhaps be harder to complete than the average module. Part of the test of a 'good' AD&D player is knowing the most efficient ways to kill opponents (and knowing when to run away!). So the combat might seem harsh to those used to stepping through tribes of Kobolds, murdering them at the rate of twenty a round.

Intellect is also tested well, though it is difficult to offer examples without giving too much away. Suffice it to say that there is a right way and a wrong way to do everything in this module — the test of a clever party being to get it right most of the time. This may be beyond less able players. Even so, the scenarios are a joy to play for the few times that you do get it right.

The scenarios read well, in that no part strikes DM or player as overwhelmingly silly, something which is important if players are to get into the atmosphere of the module. The heavy combat sessions are disadvantageous in this respect, since they tend to break the flow of play: it is always a problem in large parties to keep the other four fifths interested while one fifth beat a monster's head into the ground. In general, though, the scenarios are a pleasure to play and run. For me, play was overshadowed by the premise of the adventure: the party is on a quest which, in the sequel module, will hopefully lead to the resurrection of a long-dead king. How pleased would you be if you'd been dead for a few centuries and then some guys revitalised you and asked you to rule their kingdom for them?

Jez Keen

Dragons of Mystery

'Inn Fellow' characters. It is a short narrative telling of their childhood, how they all met and became friends. Welcome news for DMs, who are continually pestered by their players for sort of background information.

The final section contains detailed character sheets for the main pre-generated characters. Each contains a picture of the character, seen for the first time from head to foot. Previous modules have only revealed the heads! Full statistics are given for the characters when they commence DL1, along with a brief history and a description of personality and appearance. This information is considerably more comprehensive than has appeared previously. My players all commented that it would have been much better if they had had this information from the very start, so that they could role-play the characters to a greater extent. Receiving odd snippets of information as the story progresses can cause problems when someone is playing a character one way and then discovers that their personality is something totally different.

Overall DL5 is a good attempt to bring together all the background information contained in the first four modules and bring in some new details. It is written in the same clear, concise style as the previous modules. I could only find one inconsistency: the motto of the Knights of Solamnia seems to have changed somewhere along the way. But why wait until now to publish it, and why call it DL5? Ideally, this should have been provided with DL1. The numbering gives the impression that it is not required until after DL4 has been played. Some clearer information on the cover as to just what it is would have been appreciated.

Although in no way essential, Dragons of Mystery is recommended for anyone running the DragonLance modules or contemplating doing so.

Alan Mynard

Dispel Confusion

Role-playing games have rules which are open to interpretation, and this sometimes causes problems when two gamers interpret things differently. ***Dispel Confusion*** *is a column intended to help by providing answers to rules questions.*

At present we mainly answer questions about TSR games; while the answers we give are not fully official we do have contact with the designers and a good deal of playing and refereeing experience.

An answer column needs questions, so send yours to: Dispel Confusion, TSR UK Ltd, The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD. If you don't want to wait for your question to appear in the magazine, please enclose a 9"x 4" SSAE.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games

Q. How do characters heal, other than by using clerical spells? *(Basic)*

A. Healing is one of the areas that the rules seem to have overlooked up to now. In module **X7: War Rafts of Kron**, a section of new rules states that if characters rest for an entire day they will heal one hit point. If they do not spend a major portion of the day resting, they do not heal at all. Rest means just that — no strenuous intellectual or physical activity by the character (spell learning, for example, counts as a strenuous activity in this context).

The only difference in the advanced game is that, at the end of each week of rest, a character's constitution bonus or penalty is added to (or taken away from) the hit points regained, giving a total of 4-10 hit points. In addition, no matter how many hit points have been lost, 4 weeks of continuous rest will restore a character to full strength. This system may seem a bit slow after the speed of clerical healing magic, but it is a reasonable application of logic to the problem.

Q. If a creature (eg a coffer corpse) or object causes fear and a character flees from it after failing the saving throw, only to return to face the creature, will it repeatedly have the same effect? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. When magical fear could have an effect on a character there are two possible results: the character flees in panic or makes a saving throw and ignores the effects of the fear. Once the character has run away, the fear will gradually wear off, and the character can return to face the creature, (say a coffer corpse), that caused the effect in the first place. However, when the creature is seen again, another saving throw must be made.

Q. How long will a druid's mistletoe function before a new batch will be required? *(Advanced)*

A. The rules give no guidance whatsoever on how long a druid's mistletoe lasts when used for casting spells. However, it is a spell component, and the effects of magic-user spells on their components is quite clear: the components are destroyed to provide the necessary power for the spell. Even spells without apparent material components use the air that a magic user breathes out as their material component.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a druid's mistletoe, which is a spell component, is used up (to provide power for the spell) during the process of casting a spell. The idea that a druid's mistletoe is used up during spell-casting is also implied by the table in the *Notes regarding Druid (Cleric) spells* (PHB, p54). If the mistletoe was a per-

GAME COMPANY

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Clubs

Not so many clubs this month: does this mean that everything's hunky dory out there? See this month's **Soapbox** for one person who still hasn't found an RPG club: Victoria Kassner, of **SW LONDON**. Write to her c/o IMAGINE magazine and we'll forward your letter.

BRENTWOOD, Essex: 'Brentwood Role Club — you name it and we will play it. Ages from 11 years and 17 years — Tuesdays 7pm.' Hermit Centre, Shenfield Rd. Tel: Brentwood 218897.

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LYDNEY, Gloucestershire: Stephen Sayers is an experienced roleplayer (**D&D, RQ, T&T, Traveller, Space Opera, WoW** and **BOOT HILL** games) and about to move to Lydney, where he hopes some RPGers might be hiding. Write to him at 12 Dovedale, Thornbury, Avon.

WATTON, Norfolk: DM and player of over 8 years experience would like to start or join an **AD&D** campaign in the Watton/Dereham area. Tel: Bryan on Watton 881417.'

WINDSOR, Berkshire: RPG Club: 'Campaigns in **AD&D, Traveller, Chivalry & Sorcery, Diplomacy** and **RuneQuest** games. We'll try anything. 7-10pm Tuesdays, Windsor Youth Centre, Alma Road, Windsor. Contact the Judge (07535) 69050.'

Events

If you would like publicity for your gaming event, write to us with details...

First: don't forget about **MANORCON**, the UK's largest **Diplomacy** tournament: July 19 -21, at High Hall, Birmingham University. Convention fee £4; B&B £12.75 per night. Full details available from Bill Wright, 43 Faroe Rd, London W14.

The same weekend this month, **ALBACON**, Central Hotel, Glasgow, with confirmed guests Anne McCaffrey and Harlan Ellison. Write to 20 Hillingdon Gdns, Cardonald, Glasgow.

CAMCON will be a small Science Fiction convention; as ever, the more RPGers attend, the more facilities there will be for them. They have 'tentatively programmed a panel' on RPGs. GoH John Christopher. Other attractions: book room, films, late bar... Attending membership £7, Room £16.10 per night. 13-15 September, New Hall College, Cambridge. Neil Taylor, Perspective Design, 9 Pembroke St, Cambridge CB2 3QY will doubtless supply more details if requested.

On the same weekend, 13-15 September, **CONQUEST** at Queens Hotel, Hastings. This is a general games con. Write to John Marsden, 17 Church Rd, St Leonards, Hastings TN37 6EF for further details.

GAMES DAY will be at the Royal Horticultural Hall, London, as usual: 28-29 September.

ARTICON will be at Hatfield Poly, 4-6 October. Participatory artshow and competition dungeon. Write to secretary Jaine Fennell, 278 Chapman Hall, Bishops Rise, Hatfield, Herts.

MIDCON — the Star Trek version — will be at October 11-13 at Leicester International Hotel. Fancy dress, quiz, auction etc. Registration £7.50, hotel room £15.50. Details from Terry Elson, 8 Ennerdale Cl, Oadby, Leicester.

MIDCON, the Diplomacy one, will be in Nottingham, 8-10 November, so far as we know! More details when we have them.

NOVACON will be at the De Vere Hotel, Coventry, November 1-3, with guests Dave Langford and James White. Details from 86 Bearwood Farm Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1AG.

manent possession of the druid (once it had been harvested), there would be no need to worry about the reduced effects of using poor quality and ersatz mistletoe in spell casting. We suggest that each druidic spell requires only 2 leaves.

Druids should obviously spend a lot of their time looking out for mistletoe when on adventures (they cannot afford to miss a single bit of it), and cultivating it when 'at home'. Come Midsummer Eve, the hills, valleys and forests should be alive with the sound of druids painstakingly harvesting mistletoe in the approved fashion...

Q. When do bards gain druidic abilities? *(Advanced)*

A. Bards do not gain druid abilities. They gain the ability to cast druidic spells, but do not have the ability to identify plants, pass through undergrowth, charm woodland creatures or change form. Bards are not druids, they are merely undergoing training by druids.

Interestingly, the bard is only an optional character in the AD&D® game, and the designer, Gary Gygax, has even admitted that the class is grossly unbalanced.

Q. Why do fighters get 1 attack per level against creatures with less than one hit die? *(Advanced)*

A. A creature with less than one hit die — the humble rat, for example — is hardly likely to put up much of a fight against a trained and experienced wielder of a sword. Remember that a melee round is a minute long, so multiple attacks against such creatures are hardly unreasonable. Furthermore, consider what happens if a pack of rats attacks a lone fighter who only has one attack per melee round. The rats stand an excellent chance of tearing him to bits...

Q. If a cleric is casting a **cure wounds** spell of some type on an ally engaged in combat does the cleric have to roll 'to hit' in order to touch the recipient of the spell's effects? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. Yes, in most circumstances. However, the cleric's ally may well be willing to be 'touched'; when in combat he or she is presumably very pre-occupied leaping around fighting. We suggest that the cleric should make a hit roll at +2 ignoring any dexterity or shield bonuses of the would-be recipient.

Of course, if a cleric is casting a **cause wounds** spell of some type, a normal 'to hit' roll is required to touch the victim, who may well be dodging about trying to avoid the cleric's touch.

Q. Has the ability to turn the undead got a maximum range, and if so, what is it? *(Basic/Advanced)*

A. No range is given at all in either of the game systems. However, there must be limitations. Turning the undead by 'phoning them up simply is not on.

The undead must be able to 'see' the cleric waving the appropriate holy symbol at them, and hear whatever phrase for banishing the undead the cleric has chosen to employ. The relevant dice are then rolled, and the undead are turned (or not). It is reasonable to assume that those closest to the cleric are turned before any that are further away.

Until an official ruling appears, we suggest that the maximum range for turning the undead is 60 feet/yards. This is a practical maximum range at which a cleric can get the message across that it is a good idea for the skeletal chappies to run away!

Jim Bambra, Mike Brunton, Phil Gallagher and Graeme Morris

ROBIN OF MODRED
A SUNNY DAY IN THE FOREST OF DREAMS...
TRULY I AM FAMISHED, BUT ALAS! THERE IS NAUGHT TO EAT SAVE MUSHROOMS!
THE PALADIN THOUGHT THEM GOOD AND THE LOCALS PRIZE THEM HIGHLY, YET I MISDOUBT ME STILL...
HO, SIRRAH! WILL YON MUSHROOMS MAKE A MEAL WHICH IS TASTY, NUTRITIOUS, AND FREE FROM UNWHOLESOME SIDE-EFFECTS?
WELL-I FIND THAT THEY MAKE EXCELLENT EATING...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, THEN!
CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP!
BUT OF COURSE WE HALFLINGS ARE PROVERBIALLY FOND OF MUSHROOMS!

ILLUMINATIONS

Unleashed Advanced

The **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game is on the move again. Sometime about now, a shipment from the USA will be bringing over the first copies of **Unearthed Arcana**, the seventh volume of the Advanced system.

Those of you with long memories will recall there being talk of a **Players Handbook II** and **DMG II**; this is essentially a combination of the two. And by the miracle of the photocopy, we can now tell you what this exciting volume contains:

Players Information: Social Status & Birth Tables; Comeliness; Updated Character Race Tables; New Level Limits for Demi-Humans; Drow PCs; Updated Character Class Tables; Druid — new upper levels; Fighter — Weapon Specialization; Barbarian; Cavalier; Cavalier-Paladin; Revised Ranger Abilities; MU Spellbooks; Illusionist Spellbooks & Starting Spells; Thief-Acrobat; Character with 2 classes; Updated Weapon Proficiency Table; Armour and Barding; New Weapons (+Updated Weight and Damage Table, Updated 'To Hit' Adjustments); New Spells — Cleric, Druid, MU, Illusionist, Cantrips

DMG Addenda: Recharging Magical Items; Updated and Altered Random Treasure Tables; Inner Planes; Pole Arms; Appendix R — Demi-human Abilities; All-in-one Clerical Quick Reference Chart

At the time of press, we've no idea how heavily revised the character classes, spells or social status rules have been from the first versions, as printed in **IMAGINE™** magazine. At least it saves us from having to reprint #2 or #11 — remember this is where you saw them first, folks!

From Stonehenge, Illinois

Among the various interesting things that have recently left the Chaosium premises, two deserve special mention. One is the long-awaited **Pendragon**, an Arthurian rpg. It's based on the **Runequest** system, with atmospheric modifications and a very colourful map embellished with heraldic devices and featuring well-known British towns and locations incorrectly positioned in the usual American way. The other Chaosium release I referred to is Mr Steve Perrin. This prolific and talented designer, who has had a hand in most of Chaosium's triumphs, is leaving in what are described as 'amicable' circumstances. It is understood that he will still be providing them with material on a freelance basis.

Virgin on the Move

Anyone going to the Virgin Games Centre at 22 Oxford Street to buy the latest copy of IMAGINE™ magazine after July of this year is liable to be severely disappointed. Why? Because VGC will have moved to new premises by then. All is not lost however, as the new shop is just up the road, and in Oxford Street. It is bigger than the existing place, all on one level, it has been completely gutted and refitted and should look rather smart. Nor is it Virgin's only new opening this summer; there will also be new shops in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Scotland is not virgin territory for Virgin, of course. They are already represented in Aberdeen where their shop is managed by Jim Waugh, ex-proprietor of Black Donald's games Shop.

Do Not Pass Go....

And now, as promised, a further look at some of the Mayfair Games products currently on sale in the UK.

As well as a good range of supplements for various rpgs, Mayfair have an impressive selection of boardgames, many based on well-known books or films. A title that commanded my attention was **Sanctuary**, subtitled the boardgame of Robert Lynn Asprin's **Thieves World**. Certainly a subject with a fine pedigree, including several collections of short stories (published in the UK by Penguin) and a well-respected rpg supplement from Chaosium. The atmosphere from the Chaosium game is apparent in the box art of **Sanctuary**, a vivid and captivating visual summary of the kind of place that prospective players can expect to game in.

The box contains a colourful board showing the city of Sanctuary, mounted on thick card, and comprising 6 interlocking pieces in the typical Mayfair style. The game offers solitaire, basic and advanced play, and looks as though it would be easy to learn and get involved in.

The Forever War is a different game altogether. It's in the hex grid, unit counter tradition of serious wargames and is described as 'squad level combat in the third millenium'. Ten scenarios, from different stages in the Forever War against the Taurons, are presented along with mechanics for designing others. Joe Haldeman, author of the book, chips in with an essay on the nature of the war being portrayed and a piece about his own unnerving Vietnam experiences.

Books and Magazines

Tortured Souls 7 maintains that publication's reputation for value. The price has been put up to £2.95, but it is still a bargain. Coloured floor plans are included which are markedly inferior to the commercial sets previously used in TS, which were designed by the **Endless Plans** people (EP are now part of the Avalon Hill empire; the existing Endless Plans series are to be repackaged in due course) are still a nice addition to the competition scenario (interestingly suitable for **Dragonroar** as well as the **D&D®** and **AD&D®** games) they accompany. Also included is a single character scenario; *not* a solo (there will be no more solos in TS until September), but intended for one player plus DM.

Creatures and Treasures is a new book from Iron Crown Enterprises, applicable to most popular role-playing systems. It's a nicely produced work of 96 pages with a very good cover picture, although I think the lightly armed and armoured adventurer on the cover has taken on more than he can handle. It is a *very* comprehensive book of monsters and treasure defined in ICE's own games. Conversion notes are included so that the stats can be translated into values suitable for the AD&D and Runequest games. ICE's products are consistently high quality, but there is one thing that I hate about all of them, that curious predilection for awarding each other cute little nicknames in the credits of every publication of theirs I have ever seen. Professionals who are offering a serious work for sale to the public (the price of these items classes them as 'serious') should refrain from such juvenile self-advertisement in deference to the rights of the purchaser not to have books in their collection disfigured in this way. What may be acceptable in a free newsletter is *not* acceptable when money is changing hands. Otherwise, carry on as before, ICE.

Game News is a new US games magazine covering all aspects of hobby gaming, that is to say role-playing, wargames and general adult games. #1 looks promising, with pieces on **Paranoia**, Dungeoneering, reviews, cartoons, news, etc. Unlike most imported magazines, GN will be air-freighted in but its distributors, Grenadier Models UK, bringing current issues into Britain only 10-14 days after US release. GN is £1.95 a copy.

Grenadier UK also have some interesting new **Call of Cthulhu** creatures available, including Cthonians, Nyarlathotep, Tsathoggua, Old One, Dimensional Shambler, Spawn of Cthulhu and Hunting Horror. In their **Fantasy Lords** range, look out for Elite Undead Infantry, Flying Carpet with Crew, Armoured Centaurs, Umberhulk and Goatkin Warriors.

YOUR NAME IS AVENGER! NINJA WARRIOR! MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS! TRAINED IN THE WAY OF THE TIGER!..

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Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson
The No1 Adventu
THE WAY OF THE TIGER 1
AVENGER!
Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson
The No1 Adventure Game Series

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EARTH WOOD

In EARTHWOOD, twenty-five players compete to be the ultimate ruler by controlling all the developed cities, either singularly or with an alliance. A typical game will last about 18 months with the first knockouts usually starting after six months.

Each player is either a king of a fantasy race or powerful charismatic character. Your character or king controls several groups each of which is totally independent of each other. You can recruit trolls, wildmen and others into your armies, and even control powerful creatures such as dragons. Your characters will capture and control cities, upon which you can spend gold to improve security, increase your workshop's production, build defences and maintain and enlarge your army. With gold your wizards undertake magical research, learning new spells. Spies search out enemy strongholds and then attempt acts of sabotage, theft and assasination. These are just a few options available to a player in EARTHWOOD.

EARTHWOOD is computer moderated but the turn sheets and replies are written in plain English so that you can easily understand them. No need to look through complex charts and code books to understand this game.

KJC GAMES

To enrol in Earthwood send £5.00 cheque/PO payable to KJC Games. For this you recieve the rulebook, setup and first three turns. Future turns are £1.50. Send to KJC Games, 5 Vicarage Avenue, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancashire. FY5 2BD.

Letters

How quickly the time passes. Once more you have arrived at that part of the magazine where the debate is hot and furious, and the typesetting is tricky. Another sample of the ever-swelling mailbag that arrives at:

IMAGINE magazine (letters), The Mill, Rathmore Rd, CAMBRIDGE CB1 4AD.

Where shall we start? Well, how about a few endearing remarks about #26?

James A Dempster, Tunriff, Aberdeenshire: Shock, horror, probe — #26 — a half decent **IMAGINE™** magazine — it can't go on — the strain will prove too much.

What was so good? Well, it wasn't the dreadful cover, which made it look like a second-rate computer magazine. But inside, some useful information.

The revised Monstermark was very handy, particularly for those who don't have antique copies of **White Dwarf**. The system as revised also went some way towards removing the inconsistencies.

Fellow Travellers is the sort of thing some people have been doing for ages, but was a useful article which might persuade some of the hack and slash variety to do something different on their journeys to and from holes in the ground — it'll make a change from burning down every tavern in sight. And talking of burning taverns, it would be nice to see an article on bar-room brawls; at present they always end up as *Conan The Destroyer* meets *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. What damage does a chair across the head do, what is a 6th level fighter's chance of swinging across on a chandelier?

Onto **The Great Paladin Hunt** — hate paladins, kill, maim, slaughter, destroy, mutilate, rip open, aaaarghh.... sorry, got a bit carried away there. Seriously, though, most people I know would want to play the gnolls.

Simon Mark Donald, Newton Hall, Durham: The cover of #26 is nice; at least it's bright. But I thought it was an FRP magazine, not an SF one. I suppose that's why you put the big pink thing on to remind us.

I really enjoyed the article about **GamesFair**, but what about some pictures of the IMAGINE magazine staff? Don't use recent ones from GamesFair though, we don't want to see any baggy-eyes zombies.

I also liked **The Adventurers' Guild**, it had some good ideas. Wasn't so keen on the Monstermark. And why is everyone at IMAGINE magazine so fanatical about this supposed Archer class; it's a load of **** and nowhere near as good as the Anti-Paladin.

G Cameron, Kenton, Middx: Looking at #26, I had a bit of a shock — a decent cover at last! Very stylish, a trifle reminiscent of the AT-AT type things in *Star Wars*.

The GamesFair bit was interesting — if you were lucky enough to go. This year I think I'll send the money in about July. The Adventurers' Guild lecture was good for all those players wanting something up their sleeves. Some of the ideas were very good.

I've never really had time to use Monstermark, but the article brought it up to date. I don't generally like Paul Vernon's writing style, but Fellow Travellers was interesting at least. I seem to remember **Dragonlords** printing some stuff — a bit more detailed, but with less scope — back in '82.

The Great Paladin Hunt looked like an excellent scenario, a worthy successor to **Round The Bend**. The tongue-in-cheek style added to its appeal. Next year, I think I'll try and get the *Orc's Revenge* editors to enter a team for the competition.

Paul Mason, University of Warwick: #26 was pretty large, I must say, what with the game in the middle. **Monstermark Revisited** looked suspiciously like a **WD** reject, and while the idea is all well and good, Roger Musson's approach came over a little creakily. I mean, even TSR modules have progressed beyond the 'multi-level-dungeon/wilderness' style that Roger is writing about.

I've also said some nasty things about Paul Vernon before, but Fellow Travellers has a lot going for it. Instant applicability to the mainstream game while encouraging diverse and interesting NPCs. Nope, can't really quibble with that at all.

Pity I didn't get to Reading in time for the Paladin Hunt, as I reckon the Warwick Anarchists and Rolegaming Trendies (complete with one member who's a glove puppet, and the only one coming up with bright ideas) would have been soundly massacred.

Challenging hotly for the coveted last place prize, eh? Many others have had a go at The Great Paladin Hunt and enjoyed themselves. If you're one of those sophisticates who would have enjoyed playing the gnolls, then we might have a little competition to interest you next month.

While we're mentioning #26, the Monstermark article, and old copies of White Dwarf, there were one or two of you who were as keen eyed as Mr Ayres....

Geoff Ayres, Pocklington, York: I found the **Japanese article Bujutsu in the AD&D®** game by Graeme Davis in #25 a good interpretation of the **Bushido** system for the narrow, simplistic AD&D game. In fact, it was almost as good as an article in **White Dwarf** 43 (just within living memory!) entitled **Bujutsu — Monkish Martial Arts**, by one Graeme Davis. The two articles have more than a passing resemblance to each other.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this state of affairs, save the worrying trend it points to. In recent years, there has been a great deal of material on the adaptation of Bushido to the AD&D and **Runequest** games. Neither is capable of reflecting Japanese combat satisfactorily. Only Bushido itself achieves this, and then only through a great deal of background and flavouring. In imitating Bushido, a backward step is being taken.

It seems that the urge to fill your pages with good reading matter has overridden the objective of producing useful material. Derivistic rehashes of this kind will not help your climb from a glorified fanzine, to an 'Adventure Games Magazine'. Excellent material, such as the **Words of Go-Guji** scenario will, and may even convince me to buy your publication regularly. Finally, I would like to congratulate Mr Davis on pulling this stunt off.

I wouldn't want anyone to get the idea that this is the beginning of a sequence of WD reprints, but it stands to reason that eventually paths are likely to cross when you are dealing with role-playing games. Some subjects are going to be tackled by everyone concerned. In this particular instance, we hadn't noticed the similarity, despite advice from GD that WD were using similar material that he had sent them some considerable time before. We were more concerned with getting together a package that might allow people in mainstream frp games some insight into the possibilities of playing in an Oriental environment, in an issue which seems to have gone down quite well:

David Webster, Birstall, Leics: To be truthful, it was with some trepidation that I awaited the 'Far East' Special. I was worried that the flavour and spirit might be lost under a mountain of stats. Although some people will just add the new weapons to their standard, flavourless setting, there was plenty of material for those prepared to use it. Most campaigns could have a far-off land into which such a society could be placed, although it is essential to have good role-players to get the full enjoyment from the setting. The only part I wasn't too keen on was the use of the **Ogre Magi** as a player character.

James Rickett, Shaldon, Devon: I would like to congratulate you on the 'Far Eastern Special'. It was excellent.

I S McCulloch, Sunderland: Many thanks for **The Words of Go-Guji** by Mike Brunton, and the articles by Graeme Davis. Our group found them a refreshing change from the sterilised alien futurism I just put them through. I would like to take up one point; the suggestion made by Mr Davis that characters with high strengths might inflict greater damage with a bow than their weaker counterparts. Some players in our group have been trying to get 'to hit' bonuses for strength for some time, but I've always denied them this because when a bow is set, the power delivered is provided by the bow itself, not the person aiming it. The archer provides the power to set the bow; thus strength only determines if the bow can be drawn at all. Extra strength would only strain the bow and possibly break it.

S M Culshaw, Bolton, Lancs: First, I would like to congratulate the entire crew at IMAGINE magazine for producing such an amazing issue (#25, of course). Verily 'twas an issue to be proud of. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and am looking forward to springing The Words of Go-Guji on my players. The articles on Bujutsu and **Pentak Silat** were brilliant, so let's have more of it.

Maybe, maybe. Well, a gold star and a tick for all concerned, it seems, with the possible exception of the twit who bought the Bujutsu article without noticing the similarities to that other version....

I have here a small pile of letters from various people about the forthcoming changes to our hobby coverage. Some of these are rather pre-judging what might be done, based on what has been discussed by the interested parties:

Daniel Sumption, Teddington, Middx: I'm glad to hear that **Redfox** should soon be appearing on the pages of your magazine. The current comic strips, although reasonable, come nowhere near the standard to be found elsewhere. Artwork in general is also rather poor, although the cover of #24 and Jeremy Goodwin's pictures for the module in #22 were very good. I recently bought a copy of the fanzine **Demons Drawl** and the artwork there was of a high standard, especially David Foster and Hudson Shaw. I hope that you can make improvements in this field; otherwise recent magazines were good.

Tony Keen, Edinburgh: My first thought was "Oh no, they're not going to turn it into another **Black Sun**, are they?" That's the main worry I still have about the revisions to the fan coverage, that it will be the first step towards throwing it out of IMAGINE magazine altogether.

In-depth reviews of 'zines are a good idea, although I'm not in favour of reducing the

number reviewed. The approach I would favour would be the one I use in the Zine Reviews in **Obscurity Inc**; review a selection fairly fully, and make sure all the rest are at least mentioned.

Featuring fan art, particularly the idea of short strips, is a good idea. The whole approach might be successful in getting more people interested in fandom, although I have this terrible feeling that there will always be those who will continue to ignore 'zines and bemoan their presence in IMAGINE magazine.

I would have thought that was a raging certainty. One thing you quickly learn from doing a column like this is that publishing an article that is loved by ***everybody*** *is as likely as Darlington winning the FA Cup. The whole point is that if the Hobby coverage is to be a success, then people must read it, and if they don't then we must change our ideas. The same is true of the art in this magazine, some people like it, some people hate it, but drafting in any number of new artists will not be an overnight cure.*

In the meantime, we need as many of you as possible to tell us what and who you want to see covered in the new sequence of pages for Hobby news, chat, 'zines and people (starting any month now). Particularly, we want to hear which artists currently not employed by the professional magazines you think ought to be; one new feature of the hobby coverage will be a spotlight on new artists, who might find themselves on a larger stage thereafter.

That just about wraps it up. One last word from James Dempster, I think, while we're thinking about cartoons and things.

James A Dempster: Last, but not least, new fan coverage promised. Could this mean the return of Godfrey the Kobold and Poisonous Toerag, or can we expect something fresh, new and exciting, and even more interested in walking the divide between libel and legality? A word of warning though — don't take the results of the **Readers' Poll** seriously. After all, some idiots out there don't like **Rubic**, and, as everyone knows, Rubic is King, Rubic is brilliant, Rubic is utterly baffling unless you have all 26 issues, but Rubic is the thing which keeps an insane and aged 20 year old like me getting IMAGINE magazine.

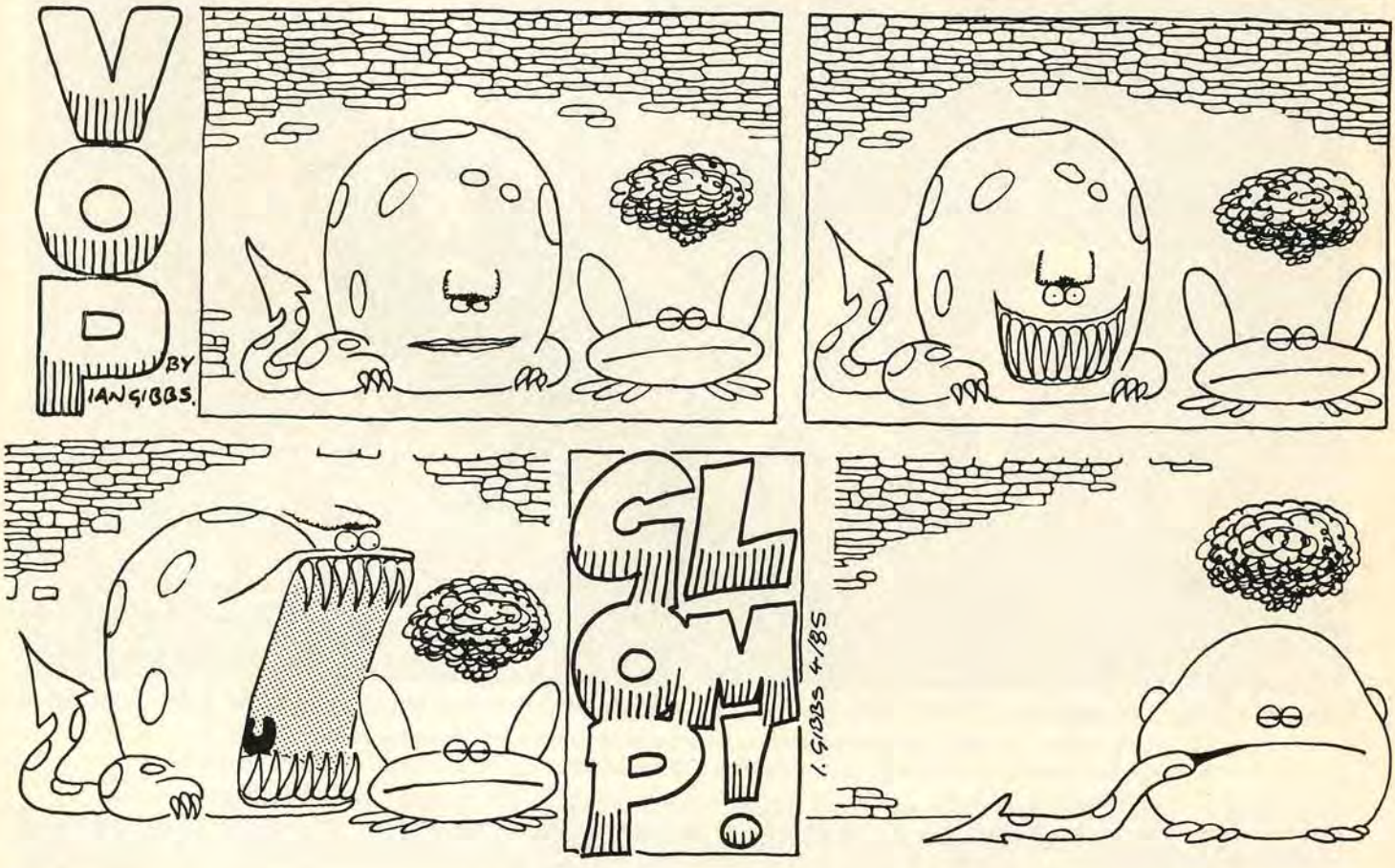
So let's have no more complaints; Rubic is a social service untouched by the government. We are also opening up a second letter box for the get rid of Auchter and bring back ***Phalanx*** *mail that is sure to start from next month....*

Simon Donald: PS — **No** funny remarks about Sunderland being relegated. Anyway I have changed teams to Darlington.

That's put me in my place. I can't think of anything funny to say about Darlington....

Letters edited by Paul Cockburn

Letters



Next Issue

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The Halls of the Dwarven Kings (£7.95), The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan (£4.95) and Tortured Souls! (£2.95) are distributed to trade exclusively by, and available direct by post from **Beast Enterprises Limited**, Divinity Road, Oxford, OX4 1LR.

Please mention IMAGINE magazine when replying to advertisements

A powerful friend may attract powerful enemies: jealous NPCs may try to poison the mind of the patron, or the bodies of the player characters!

You know all about dungeon adventuring, and plenty has been said on the subject of wilderness adventures, but have you thought about civilisation adventures? It is easy enough to think of the area of towns, villages and cities, of arable land and pasture, as no more than a safe haven from which adventurers sally out into the wilds to do battle with orcs or dragons, and to which they return at the end of the day to rest, recuperate and re-equip. This is an unnecessarily sharp divide — adventure can occur anywhere!

Consider the repertoire of fantasy literature. Certainly, in some books there is a strong tendency to differentiate between home ground and the wilds, with adventure happening in the latter as opposed to the former. Bilbo leaves the security of the Shire for the wild lands of the Misty Mountains and Mirkwood; while Elric goes one better and seems to be hurled from one edge of the world to the next every two chapters. But this is not always the rule — Frodo has to leave the Shire because otherwise adventure would have come looking for him, and in some novels almost all the action occurs within the bounds of civilisation.

If you are intending to try and run an imaginative, realistic campaign, rather than a simple hack-and-slay game, you should give some thought to this. Just as there are events occurring in the wilderness that will affect the player characters' lives, new dragons a-hatching, liches plotting spells of revenge in their desolate hideaways, and so on, so too will there be things of note happening in civilised realms. Perhaps more things, and of more far-reaching import. What power struggles are in process? Who is plotting to seize the throne? What wars are being meditated? What new legislation is being contemplated? These are things that may be happening all the time in the capital city of the realm where the player characters live. And any one of them could be the basis for an adventure. Suppose, for instance, the Duke of Zog is known to be preparing an edict to banish the worship of Dionysus from his realm, and suppose further that one of the player characters is a cleric of this particular divinity. Suppose the local Dionysian priesthood contact said character (and thereby the whole party) to try and enlist cooperation in a desperate plan to make the Duke change his mind... I'm sure you can see how it might unfold — a sort of fantasy Mission Impossible.

Not that it need be quite so dramatic as that. One friend of mine, a former fanzine editor and veteran of many an early dungeoneering exploit, confessed to me that the most enjoyable gaming session he had taken part in was one based around nothing more fantastic than a boar hunt in a local wood.

One important point: it might be thought that political involvement in a campaign is something that players can only aspire to after much seasoned adventuring down the neighbourhood dungeon to acquire sufficient wealth and experience points to hobnob with the great and mighty. In this scheme of things a campaign starts out with the players as plebs hacking and slaying their way to fame and fortune, and only then, once endowed with castles and followers, do they wake up to the fact that there is more to town life than the inn and the armourer's, and that they have political responsibilities.

This need not be the case, given some imaginative gamesmastering. A second-level cleric may not carry much political clout alone, but may still be in a position to wield considerable influence, for instance on coming to the notice of a rather doddery lord (through performing some special service) and being appointed as a personal confessor. The relatively minor player character who thus becomes attached to a powerful NPC may benefit both by being in a position to give advice to someone of considerable influence, and also to manoeuvre patronage for the party as a whole for certain 'chores' which might be anything from a rescue mission to political assassination. Another advantage of this sort of set-up is that the DM still holds the real power, and if things start getting out of proportion, the NPC can either 'go off' his young protegé, or go off altogether — on crusade. Furthermore, a powerful friend is likely to attract for the players some powerful enemies — other NPCs jealous of the players' patronage may try anything from poisoning the mind of the patron to poisoning the bodies of the player characters!

Remember that you may have to play experience a little differently, since players will not be killing so many monsters, but doing things far more deserving of experience points. And they may get their money from grants, payments, allowances and bribes rather than picking it out of chests. But one of the great advantages of this sort of adventuring is that it opens up areas of the game that are normally not much in evidence. Thieves' skills suddenly become much more interesting. There may actually be pockets worth picking for a change. Spell-casters may find a use for all those non-combat-related spells that never seem to get a look in normally.

Exactly what happens in the end will depend partly on the actions of the players and partly on what the DM allows them — there is no reason why, if the circumstances are right, a player character may not rocket to power and glory before even making fifth level. Consider how many people in history have risen meteorically from poor beginnings to the corridors of power through exercise of talent, brass neck and a little luck — and certainly without becoming 15th level fighters or finding dragons' hoards. If it can happen in real life it can happen in fantasy too.

Roger Musson

The Space Where Readers Tell The Professionals What They're Doing Wrong - and Right!

SOAPBOX

A Novice at GamesFair

Before anything else I would like to introduce myself: Victoria Kassner, a name regular readers of IMAGINE™ magazine might recognise, as I have had several mentions since writing a letter over a year ago (#11) on the problems of getting started in role-playing. I'd stumbled across that mysterious phenomenon, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, a few months earlier, but even now after two and a half years of interest, I'm still a complete novice. Well, maybe not complete — I've picked up a lot of theory and ideas along the way. Maybe I should reclassify myself: 'lacking in combat experience'.

There have been many articles in this magazine about that all-important first step, the latest (#23) written in direct response to my original letter, but it all appears to boil down to three methods: (1) Start your own group, (2) Go to a convention, (3) Join an existing group or club.

So let's look at these alternatives, from a novice's viewpoint. The first is daunting enough, even if you have a group of friends prepared to try it. It's pretty obvious that you can't just pick up a role-playing game and start right in, but I suppose it is possible to begin this way, provided of course that you can muster a group. If you can't, the matter becomes that much harder. In my own case, I had a group of one: myself. Nobody I knew was interested in the game and nobody was prepared to try to learn how to play it. Strike one! (Anybody out there play baseball?)

Then I met Yvonne: she had been a regular player until a few months prior to our meeting. My own curiosity about the game rekindled her interest, but she had lost contact with the people she used to play with. So the group enlarged to two — and I still hadn't actually played. It was this problem of finding others which led me to the second option.

I was a bit dubious about the idea of going to a games convention, and between my parents' look of incomprehension at the mention of role-playing, and one brother's dismissive comment, 'why would you want to go there, it'll be all experts anyway!', I wasn't exactly getting the encouragement I needed. If it hadn't been for Yvonne's enthusiasm I would probably never have even considered going. And there was plenty of time, between applying for tickets and going to Reading, to reconsider, to chicken out... Still, we had decided, as a kind of 'safety measure', just to go for the one day. I think we both had visions of a hard-sell approach with stands all over the place and various games companies vying for customers for their products; of reunions between groups of people who'd known each other for years and wouldn't be prepared to let outsiders in on their fun; of the elite, serious gamers who'd look down their noses at us lesser mortals. How different was the reality of it all!

Inside the Reading Union building, it took but a moment to spot the registration desk, and here a pleasant surprise awaited me, for no sooner had we handed over our receipt than one of the two women present asked, 'Oh, which one of you is Miss Kassner?' Introductions followed. This was Kim Daniel, editorial assistant on IMAGINE magazine and a person I'd been corresponding with. She immediately led us through to the canteen for a cup of tea, then called over and introduced Paul Cockburn, the assistant editor.

Yvonne and I have nothing but gratitude for the way in which Kim and Paul made us feel so welcome. But it wasn't just these two who made the difference — everybody we met was incredibly friendly. Perhaps being girls had something to do with that; there was a marked shortage, possibly only 10% of the attendees. Perhaps it was our natural charm... well, I did keep rolling 18s for charisma! Or maybe it's just the sort of people role-playing attracts. Whatever the reason, by the end of the day we didn't want to go home, and we'd already decided to attend again next year — for the whole weekend.

We were very grateful to Paul Mason, who had a long chat with us and gave us some impartial advice on which were the better fanzines to read, in spite of being in the middle of an attack by some giant seagulls... to Roger Brewis, a teacher from Birmingham, who lived up to his profession by taking me through the process of character generation step by step. This was a particular pleasure, as at no time did he force a judgement; I got plenty of advice but each decision was my own, what I felt comfortable with, not what somebody else said was right. Maybe one day my diminutive, dark-haired elf maiden, Sharna, a lawful good cleric (with 18 charisma, remember!) will get to adventure. And also to Matt Connell, who DM'd my first (and so far only) adventure.

I learned a few things — such as how useful it is for the team to work together, and how destructive (in more ways than one) a single disruptive character can be. I was back with a lawful good cleric (not Sharna, alas!) and got to the stage of wondering whether it would spoil my alignment to strangle that obviously chaotic and probably evil dwarf who kept rushing into things before anyone else had a chance to think. At least I can look back on the justice of my die rolls, which twice completely cured our halfling thief, but only partially cured the offending dwarf on the one occasion he demanded my services. It only happened by chance, but it certainly was satisfying!

In the end, we spent most of the day talking to people rather than actually playing, and although it was very enjoyable, I didn't make any contacts which would result in some regular gaming. Not so much strike two, perhaps, as ball one.

So that leaves the third alternative, to try and find a local club. Anyone out there know one in west or central London? If nothing else, GamesFair sharpened my resolve to keep on looking for a way in. Meanwhile, thank you everyone I met at the convention for making me feel less of an outsider. Maybe I've made it to first base after all...

Press Cuttings

After last month's extravagant guide to the world of postal gaming fanzines, we are back again with the FRP zines this month. Despite the economic pressures and the claims of many existing zines that they can't find enough subscribers to cover their costs, new FRP zines are still appearing — in fact, there seem to be more zines every month! This time is no exception with five new zines, all from editors previously unconnected with fandom. The first of these is the charmingly entitled **CLOBBERING TIME!**, obviously from fans of Ben Grimm! As the title will tell comics fans, this is a superhero fanzine, and it aims to cover all the superhero systems around. This first issue is certainly a good start, with a fairly complex whodunnit scenario, some supervillains, and an excellent article on incorporating Arthurian legend into superhero games. Anyone who plays superhero games should try both this and **Superhero UK** for new material and ideas — few magazines cover SHrpgs in this sort of depth.

HITS TO KILL 1 is a reasonable first issue, but suffers from very short articles. The zine is A5, unreduced and double-spaced, so they are wasting an awful lot of paper, which could have been used to present far more depth and detail. As it is, the few articles leave you with a feeling of 'so what?' which is a shame as the magazine is well-presented and provides a (short) interesting read. **THE BOOKLET OF MANY THINGS** lacks the polish of HTK in appearance and contents, but tries to make up for it with wit and humour. Unfortunately, jokes about toads and terrible cartoons about Gary Gygax don't make up for a poor magazine! **BALROG'S BANTER** reminds me very strongly of **Demon's Drawl**, after which it was no doubt named; but the contents don't quite match up in the comparison. The material in BB is very similar to that in DD (why do so many zines have alliterative names?) but lacks the polish and content. However, considering the terrible nature of Demon's Drawl 1, Balrog's Banter could well improve in exactly the same way!

The strangely named **THE IMPALER** is the last of the first issue zines, and another which suffers from fitting too many articles into too small a space. If you are going to make a sensible point in an article, and produce an interesting and useful piece, you need more than a page (or even half a page in some cases!).

A zine new to this column, but already on issue three, is **GRIM REAPER** — a British zine (not to be confused with the New Zealand APA of the same name) devoted to **Tunnels & Trolls**. T&T is a neglected system nowadays, a shame because it is very playable. Perhaps this situation will change with a fanzine as well produced and written as Grim Reaper devoted to the cause? GR3 contains a GM's scenario, Barbarians in T&T, and a large T&T solo adventure, as well as letters and some excellent artwork.

DISPATCH IT is another clubzine, lacking the pompous, self-importance of other clubzines (thank goodness), but sharing their lack of any real quality contributions. Why clubzines are, in general, so poor is a fact which still puzzles me — anyone got any suggestions?

DEAD ELF 4 is the latest of a continually improving zine, now with very nice Hudson Shaw artwork, and a new co-editor. Andrew is properly contrite after his outburst in the previous issue, which basically demanded that prozines review fanzines, and that they had no right not to! Clearly this attitude is

Cut & Thrust

ridiculous, as he has realised. When Andrew isn't letting off steam in stupid arguments, he can be a very entertaining writer, and this latest issue contains more on the **Asterix** rpg, a detailed **Call of Cthulhu** scenario (a regular feature in most zines now), Laserburn and chat.

After a long delay, the fanzine buyer's bible, commonly known as **20 YEARS ON**, has appeared. Issue 12 is the first to be edited by Ian Shaw, and he has made a good job of it, listing all the British postal gaming fanzines, several foreign ones, and most of the FRP fanzines with a short commentary on each one. If you want to find out which zines run the games you want to play, or which cover the systems you use, then 20 Years On is an invaluable buy.

SAUCE OF THE NILE is a name hiding a reborn old zine — **Bohemian Rhapsody** folded some time ago amid various recriminations, but Malcolm Smith has now relaunched the zine (or xyn, as he insists on calling them) from his new address in Belgium. As the first issue apparently consisted of reasons why Malcolm was unable to run the last incarnation of the zine efficiently, I wonder how long this version will last. Nevertheless, this issue is nicely laid out, and contains some interesting material on Belgium and a few game openings. **CUT & THRUST** 34, on the other hand, is the latest of a very reliable and efficiently run games zine. C&T is well-known for its extremely well-organised **En Garde!** game (in which Paul Cockburn's character remains a lowly SL5, I notice!) but it also carries a lot of in-depth game and book reviews as well as running **Diplomacy, Cosmic Encounter** and **Dune**, with openings for players in the last two mentioned games.

A BOLT FROM THE BLUE 60 (incorporating **NMR!**) has the results of the Rusty Bolt awards. These are presented each year, and voted for by any member of the postal gaming hobby who feels like sending in a nomination. They are not supposed to be taken seriously, as the following categories quite clearly show: Upstart of the Year — William Whyte; The Least Regretted Fold of 1984 — **Inflammatory Material** (and Simon voted for his own zine!); The Dave Thorby Award for the Worst-Dressed Hobby person — Graham Staplehurst; The Graham Staplehurst Award for the Most Personal Fanzine — **Ode**; and finally, Wally of 1984 — Andy Blakeman. **MAD POLICY** 106 has news of the more serious Zine Poll for postal gaming zines. Any fanzine involved with postal gaming, which has published at least two issues since January 1985, is eligible. The deadline is July 20th, so you'd better get your votes in to Richard quickly!

Former Zine Poll winner, and still going strong is **GREATEST HITS** with issue 122, which continues to offer a high standard of chat, reviews and even a few games. **TAKE THAT YOU FIEND** is mainly concerned with postal gaming, but continues to fly the flag as T&T fans with new material for the game, as well as **Crimson & Gold** — a T&T-based arena combat game. **LANKHMAR STAR DAILY** may not have such a high standard of writing, but it does offer fascinating series such as the psychology of rpgs, a guide to Led Zeppelin, and of course **2112**, the giant postal FRP game.

SCAN 39 has appeared, though sadly the plans to expand to a 28-page deluxe colour magazine have had to be shelved due to problems and a poor subscription response. The editors still hope to improve the magazine in stages, however. This issue offers the usual strange and amusing cartoons, a look at a strip the *Daily Mirror* rejected (Dandelion Woods), and a guide for novice D&D adventurers on Pub Survival — one of the more important skills! Which just leaves space to mention **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL** — and excellent news sheet about the games hobby and industry.

Next month marks the anniversary of me taking over **Press Cuttings**, and a whole new format to fan coverage in IMAGINE magazine — I can hardly wait!

Mike Lewis

Contact Addresses

BALROG'S BANTER, Paul Evans, 22 Five Fields Rd, Willenhall, W Midlands (50p); **A BOLT FROM THE BLUE**, Ken Bain, 2 Albert Street, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Nottingham (45p); **BOOKLET OF MANY THINGS**, Mark Beresford, 633 Chatsworth Rd, Chesterfield, Derbyshire (50p); **CUT & THRUST**, Derek Wilson, 321 Headley Road East, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 4SE (55p); **DEAD ELF**, Andrew Fisher, 2 The Limes, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AY (45p); **DISPATCH IT**, Windsor & Maidenhead RPG Groups, 12 Boyn Hill Ave, Maidenhead, Berks (?); **GREATEST HITS**, Pete Birks, 65 Turney Road, London SE21 (50p); **GRIM REAPER**, Geraint Davies, 2 Dochdwy Rd, Llandough, Penarth, Glamorgan (60p); **HACKING TIMES**, Dylan Harris, Greenwich Young Liberals, 76 Haddo House, Haddo St, Greenwich SE10 (50p); **HITS TO KILL**, Domenic de Bechi, 20 Hamble Rd, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton (40p); **THE IMPALER**, Mark Stockton, 10 Vine Court Rd, Sevenoaks, Kent (45p); **IT'S CLOBBERING TIME**, Andrew de Salis, 1 Church Street, St George, Nr Abergele, Clwyd (60p); **LANKHMAR STAR DAILY**, Robert Nott, 158 Pendeen Park, Helston, Cornwall (60p); **MAD POLICY**, Richard Walkerdine, 144 Stoughton Rd, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6PG (40p); **SAUCE OF THE NILE**, Malcolm Smith, Bus 26, Astridplein 31-32, Antwerpen 2000, Belgium (40p); **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, Trevor Mendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent (4 for £1); **TAKE THAT YOU FIEND**, Kevin Warne, 48 Boscombe Ave, Hornchurch, Essex (35p); **20 YEARS ON**, Ian Shaw, 2 Whinfell Close, Streatham, London SW16 1QG (50p)

Fantasy Media

*Neil Gaiman, author of **IMAGINE** short stories **Featherquest** and **How to Sell the Ponti Bridge**, and co-author of **Ghastly Beyond Belief**, reviews the latest additions to the fantasy/SF media.*

Colin Greenland claims that he's gone to Colorado for two months to write a book, and that's why I'm guest-starring in his column, here and next month. Personally I don't believe a word of it. I think he had warning of the release of **SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE** (Columbia/EMI/Warner, PG), and decided to put the Atlantic Ocean and half a continent between this abomination of a film and himself. Tanya Roberts (over)plays Sheena, and rides around on an animal that is supposed to be a zebra, but which looks exactly like a very embarrassed horse covered in black and white paint, poor thing. The dialogue is laughable, the acting appalling, and the special effects outstandingly ordinary.

Then there's **TITAN FIND** (Polygram, 18), an **Alien** rip-off, in which brain-sucking monsters severely menace astronauts on Titan, Saturn's largest moon. Lots of bone-crunching, oozings, and going into dark cabins on one's own. Or there's a film that sounds like Michael Crichton's remake of **Bladerunner**, about which Professor Greenland said (before he left): When an industrial robot goes **RUNAWAY** (Tri-Star, 15), they send for Sgt Jack Ramsey (Tom Selleck) and his partner Karen Thompson (Cynthia Rhodes). But when a domestic machine carves up its owners with a kitchen knife, there's no malfunction. Someone is spreading murderous microchips. The race to outwit the cybernetic psycho is gripping stuff, mostly, with a terrifying showdown atop an unfinished skyscraper; and as the hero cop with no head for heights, Selleck is fine. In between, he spends too much time just being a heart-throb.

Moving on to videos, one of last year's cult movie successes was **REPO MAN** (CIC, 18) and it's not hard to see why. A lobotomised nuclear scientist is driving around Los Angeles in a car with *something* in the boot. Dead extraterrestrials, a neutron bomb or something even more bizarre?

Eighteen-year-old punk Otto (Emilio Estavez) is a repo man — it's his job to legally steal back cars from people who've fallen behind on the payments, a job he does with the older Bud (Harry Dean Stanton). When someone puts out a reward offer of $20,000 for the Chevvy Malibu with the Armageddon boot, Otto, Bud, other teams of repo men, punk thugs and blonde government agents all get on the trail of the car and each other.

Fantasy worlds and role-playing games are the subject of two works this month — one of which handles it surprisingly well, the other (also surprisingly) ineptly. Eleven-year-old Danny Osborne (Henry Thomas) lives in a **CLOAK AND DAGGER** (CIC, PG) world in which a trip to the shop on the corner becomes a vital secret mission. His best friend is imaginary superspy Jack Flack (Dabney Coleman) and he exasperates his eight-year-old girlfriend Kim (Christina Niga) and father (Dabney Coleman again, without the trenchcoat). So when he accidentally blunders into a spy-ring who are smuggling out secrets in an Atari **Cloak and Dagger** computer game, nobody believes him. Director Richard Franklin's fascination with Alfred Hitchcock continues; and echoes, lines and themes of Hitchcock films crop up all through this engaging and enjoyable film. **THE TWILIGHT REALM** (Arrow, £1.95) by Christopher Carpenter is a 'five D&D players are sucked into a fantasy world for real and will they suss out what's going on, defeat the evil wizard who brought them here and go home?' book. Reads like a choose-your-own-adventure game only without the options.

Penguin have brought out another fix for Thieves' World addicts, the fourth book in the series: **STORM SEASON** (£1.95). The mixture is pretty much as before, the authors ditto.

Brian Aldiss

Finally two old inextinguishables — Moorcock and Aldiss. Moorcock has given the world positively the last word in Sword and S(w)orcery in **ELRIC AT THE END OF TIME** (Granada, £1.95) — essays, short stories and such on the tortured albino prince, including the dire **Sojan the Swordsman** stories he wrote as a precocious 15-year-old.

Brian Aldiss presents two books, **HELLICONIA SUMMER** (Granada, £2.50) and **HELLICONIA WINTER** (Cape, £8.50) (if your budget or local library reaches that far), both of them pulsepounding, thought-provoking books. Rich and romantic, the story of the world of Helliconia where the seasons take two thousand years to turn, and humans and the horned and shaggy phagor are locked in continual struggle, is one that continues to echo through the mind long after the last page of the book is finished.

My pick as Book Of The Month is John M Ford's amazing **THE DRAGON WAITING** (Corgi, £3.50) which blends alternative history, wizards, vampires, spies, empires, Richard III, and a whole lot more into a complex and brilliant work, serious, funny, and highly entertaining. Ignore the fact that the cover looks as though it was painted by a retarded four-year-old and buy it anyway.

More next month. Pleasant journeys.

Neil Gaiman

WITH THE HELP OF WEASEL THE FAIRLY CLEVER AND OGRYN THE BIG, OTHRUNU MANAGES TO FORCE THE DRAGON TO MANIFEST TWELVE HOURS EARLY, SO AS TO PUT THE SKIDS UNDER LORD BANSHURGA DANASKMI (WHO IS THE MONSTER'S HEART AND SOUL, THE REST OF IT CONSISTING OF THE LOCAL VILLAGERS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE LONG BEEN PART OF HIS "PRIESTHOOD"). ONLY THE BEAUTIFUL, ELUSIVE MOURLA HOLDS THE KEY TO TOTAL POWER – AND IN MAKING HER PERFORM A 'MERMAID SACRIFICE' SHE WOULD BE HIS; FOILED, HE DRAWS THE FIBRE OF HER BODY TO WEAVE THE SCALY TERROR... SHE BECOMES THE CLAW WHICH NOW PINS OGRYN HELPLESSLY TO THE FLOOR.....
PHALANX
CHUNK the TWELFTH: DEATHBLOW!
I'D THROW THE SWORD.... BUT WHERE IS THE HEART OF A DRAGON?
IT'S NOT AS BIG AS IT WAS LAST TIME
IT'S BIG ENOUGH, CUSS IT!
MOST OF ITS SUBSTANCE IS SAFELY IN THE WATER – AND LOOK HOW IT OOZES BLOOD – THAT'S WHERE MOURLA INJURED DANASKMI! THAT IS WHERE THE DRAGON'S HEART IS!
IN THE FACE OF DEATH, OGRYN FINDS THE STRENGTH AND AGILITY TO FLING THE SWORD
KAUUUAAUGHH..... IT'S... RIDICULOUS... HOW... COULD.... SOMEBODY... AS STUPID... AS YOU.. DEFEAT... THE GREAT... THE GREAT... THE....
SCHNICK
THUNK
ARRGKKK
ONE MAN RISES AS DANASKMI FALLS...
I HEAR THE VOICE OF A YOUNG WOMAN... THE THING WE FEARED ALL ALONG... WAS OUR OWN COMMUNITY... CONTROLLED BY THIS EVIL MAN... SUDDENLY I CAN FEEL THE TOLL OF THE CENTURY THAT HAS PASSED.... OTHRUNU... I RECOGNIZE THAT VOICE... IT IS OTHRUNU!

LOOK... THE VILLAGERS ARE AGEING... DECAYING! THEY'RE ROTTING AWAY...
THERE'S HORKIN! OTHRUNU, SAVE HIM!
NO, WEASEL- WE HAVE LIVED A MOCK LIFE, BUT WE DIE HAPPY IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE CURSE IS LIFTED... THE PHALANX IS NO MORE... AAUUK
THEY HAVE LIVED A CENTURY WHICH TO THEM SEEMED THREE DAYS. I LIFTED THE SPELL FROM MOURLA WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD, TEN YEARS AGO ... SHE GREW BEYOND THE RECOGNITION OF HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS, BUT HER FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MERFOLK KEPT HER FROM SERIOUS DANGER....
I KEPT HER QUITE IGNORANT OF THE SELF-HAUNTING MAGICAL TRAP... UNTIL THE DAY AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL!
ONLY EDGOR STOOD BY ME, UNTIL TRAVELLERS CAUSED HIS BODY TO BE TAKEN WHEN THEY WOUNDED THE DRAGON... OH, BRAVE OGRYN, I...
WHERE ARE THE LITTLE DRAGONS NOW?
WE'VE RETURNED -JUST AS WE WERE WHEN WE WERE TAKEN, MOURLA...
EDGOR- IT... IT IS YOU!!
COME ON, OG. SHE WASN'T YOUR TYPE ANYWAY
SHE WAS MY TYPE, WEAS. SHE WAS MORE MY TYPE THAN ANY OTHER GIRL I'VE EVER KNOWN
THEN... MORE COMMOTION
RETURN, ALL YE MERMAIDS ON A SPECTRAL WAVE, BEAR WITH YE THE CRAB, FOR HERE IS HIS GRAVE AND THE SWORD OF PANASKMI, FOR THE BASTARD IS DEAD AND I RULE NOW, AS WELL AS THIS GATE — MY OWN HEAD...
IT'S RAINING...
STYNCH! FESTERING GNOME! COME OVER HERE AND BE PUNCHED!!
STYNCH WILL BEHAVE BETTER NOW THAT PANASKMI IS DEAD, AND THE SPELL IS OVER... BUT THIS DIMENSIONAL DOOR, ONCE CLOSED, MAY NEVER OPEN AGAIN...
YOU.. YOU'RE GOING IN?
IT'S AN EXCITING WORLD, WITH SO MUCH TO BE ENJOYED AND LEARNED. COME WITH ME....
OTHRUNU! YOU'RE YOUNG AGAIN..!
OF COURSE! IT PAYS TO KNOW THE TRICKS, BUT I WON'T EXPLAIN NOW... HURRY, THE FISSURE WILL SOON..
...SEAL ITSELF OVER... OGRYN... OGRYN ... OGRYN.. OGR...
O-O-O-G-R-Y-Y-Y-N
W-WEAS....
OGRYN... OGRYN, ARE YOU...
YES... I'M ALL RIGHT... I SO WANTED TO GO TOO.. BUT I'M ALL RIGHT. I'M GLAD REALLY...
AH..
DEAR OGRYN... WEASEL WILL COME BACK ONE DAY. BUT WE'RE HERE NOW. WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS TOO...
I KNOW... AND I FEEL STUPID..... BUT EVERYTHING'S HAPPENING ALL AT ONCE...
A GOOD BEGINNING HAS AS MUCH VALUE AS A HAPPY ENDING.... PLEASE STAY WITH US AND HELP BRING THE VILLAGE BACK TO LIFE...
AH! WISDOM AS WELL AS BEAUTY... AND LET US HOPE THAT HER WORDS SALVE WRETCHED EDGOR'S PRIDE, EH?
PREVIOUSLY MEANWHILE, LATER.....
...AND THAT'S HOW WE CAME TO BE HERE!
PULL THE OTHER THREE
Robin Grenville Evans

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NEW!
... FROM GAMES WORKSHOP!
WHOOM!
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BLADE OF VENGEANCE

Jim Bambra

You are Erystelle of Dorneryll, famed elfin champion, and mage. After years of adventuring, you have come home to the Emerlas — the beautiful woodland at the tip of Canolbarth Forest. A place of legends and peace.

Soon the winding forest track will bring you to Dorneryll — the majestic oak-tree home of your childhood. Suddenly, your reverie is shattered as a column of red flame leaps high above the trees. Dorneryll is under attack!

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Will you get there in time?

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